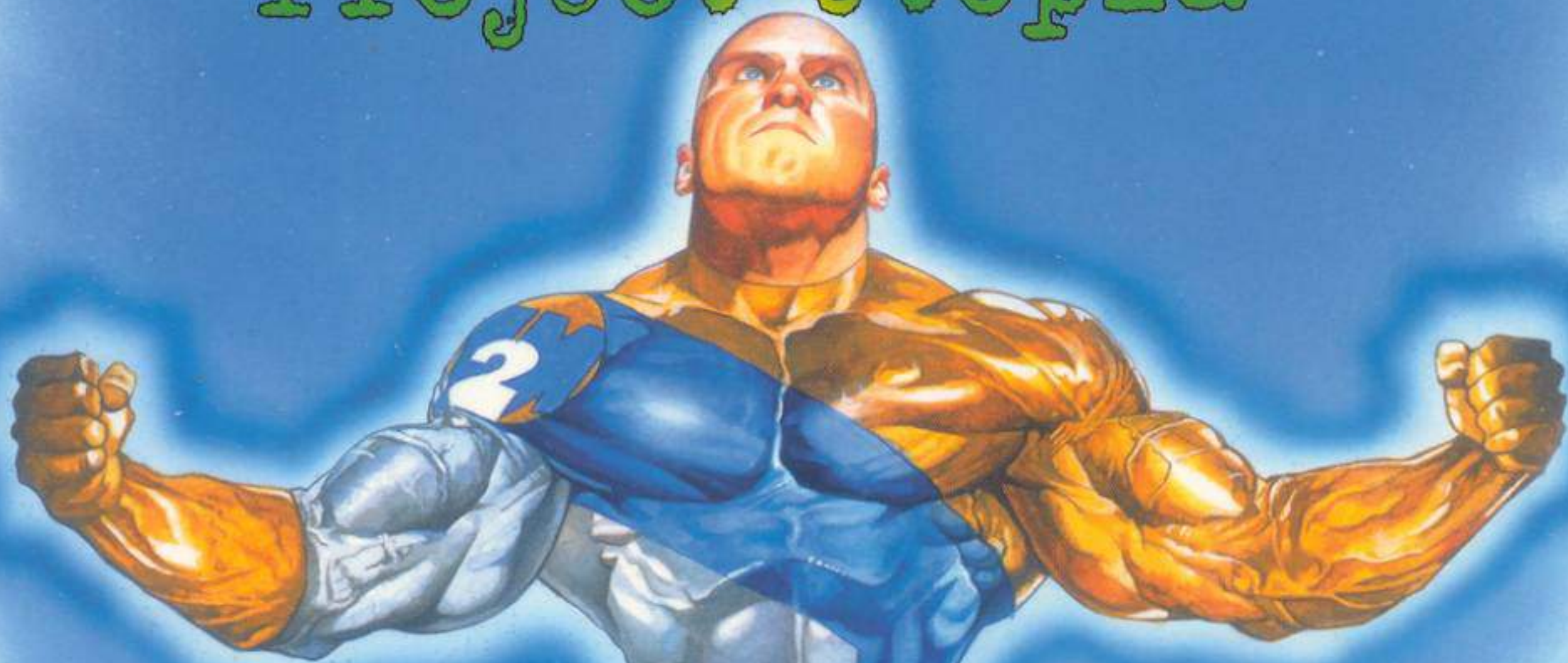




ABERRANT™

Project Utopia



FLEMING 99

Creating a Brighter Tomorrow with the Power of Today!

THE WELCOME HOME

Should I even be here? Dr. Monique Brown thought as dawn broke over the horizon beyond Century Gardens. Her car crested the hill below which the gated community lay, and she had to pull over and stop.

The sky was clearly going to be beautiful today, a deep blue sentence punctuated infrequently with clouds. The grounds of the facility sprawled out below her, a beautiful and exotic Eden to which she had somehow gained a key. No cars passed by to break her reverie, the big city was miles distant (though within reasonable commuting distance), and birds were awake and singing in the spring morning. The past four months of interviews and evaluations and tests had all led her to this point, and now she stared at the gates of her new home, literally one day away from her first assignment as an employee of Utopia.

"How in the heavens did I get here?"

Her own voice surprised her, and Monique laughed nervously in spite of herself. She had not been this edgy since December when she had first accepted Utopia's generous offer. She had spent weeks of sleepless nights thinking it over. It seemed so recently that she had relented and made the call. Now, after four months of paperwork and background checks, she was finally an official Utopian "Public-Relations Manager." Utopia had paid off her student loans, offered her an amazing salary (one that raised even the eyebrows of the other business faculty at Kellogg) and helped her finance a house here in Century Gardens. She had laid out her own hours and predetermined her vacation days and her Utopian liaison had even talked her into a comprehensive health- and dental-benefits package. Yet now that it was all taken care of, Monique could only sit and stare out her windshield at the cheerfully painted security gates enclosing the orderly community below. She wondered if maybe it all weren't too good to be true.

Even the first phone calls so many months ago had seemed like events from a waking dream....

"Excuse me, is this Professor Monique Brown?" a friendly voice on the line had chirped one night, in the middle of dinner with her sister. "My name is Kelly Lambert, Doctor Brown; I'm with Project Utopia's Human Resources Division. Have I called you at a bad time?"

"No, go ahead," she'd responded, disarmed.

"I'm so sorry to bother you, but is this the same Monique Brown who wrote her doctoral dissertation in 2002 on the use of cognitive dissonance reduction techniques in public-opinion management?"

Monique blinked several times before she could answer. That paper was still the crown jewel among all of her publications, but no one had asked her about it in years.

"Yes it is. Did we attend university together?"

"Oh goodness, no," bubbled the friendly voice, "I'm only in graduate school myself. No, the reason I ask is that one of our assistant directors discovered your thesis on file in the business library at Northwestern University and he was quite impressed. He asked me to call you and arrange an appointment to meet with him here in Chicago next week. Is that too short notice, Dr. Brown?"

"May I ask why?" Monique had asked, maintaining her composure despite her curiosity.

"I believe," Kelly said, as if it were the most obvious thing in the world, "that he wants to offer you a job."

The interview itself had been just as disconcerting....

"But why my dissertation?" Monique had asked Jay Hidaki, the Assistant Director of Utopia's Public Relations Department. "I haven't even thought about it in years."

The two sat in a roughly closet-sized office stuffed away inside the Chicago Utopia complex. Monique had bought a new business suit, retouched her résumé, found a lecturer to cover her classes at Kellogg and came to the complex a week after the first phone call. She was distinctly uncomfortable but Hidaki was doing his best to put her at ease.

"Simply put, professor, I thought your thesis was an excellent read," Hidaki answered. "It got me interested in public-opinion management again, which is something very few business texts can do."

"Thank you," Monique stammered, not expecting such unadulterated praise from a potential employer. Monique smiled; every word like that coming from his mouth effectively increased her base salary by another two thousand dollars per annum. She was pleased. She always thought the paper was worthy of more attention than it had received. Her own

graduate advisor had labeled the paper little more than adequate, and a bit esoteric as well. "I don't know what to say."

"Oh, don't worry about that, professor. I'll do enough talking for both of us. Am I correct in understanding that you now teach graduate classes in public relations at the Kellogg School of Business?"

"Yes," Monique said, "and doing research. I've been working on software that allows corporations and governments to simulate public-opinion models. I hope to see them used in predicting..."

"Predicting what?" Hidaki prompted her as the doctor blushed and looked away.

"Well, I was going to say, 'Predicting what direction public opinion will go in any particular circumstance given a certain set of probable assumptions.' I apologize if that sounds silly or unnecessarily complex."

"Not at all, professor," Hidaki said, leaning forward and waving a hand casually. "It's just that sort of thinking — and that which you demonstrated in your dissertation — that prompted me to invite you here this afternoon. Forward-looking thinkers like yourself are just the types we hope to recruit here at Utopia."

And recruit her they had. Actively. Aggressively. Utopia had done just as much work selling

her on the job as she had done convincing them that she was qualified for it. She had sailed and struggled through good, mediocre and outright lousy interviews, but she had finally been taken on as part of the team that had promised to clean up the Earth's environment and bring stability to the world. Utopia had bought off the remainder of her contract at Kellogg; as soon as the current semester ended, she was to relocate and become a part of the effort to build the perfect tomorrow.

And now here she sat, paralyzed with doubt.

As she gazed over the panorama of Century Gardens, back-lit by the rising sun, Monique saw a shape detach from the landscape well within the community's walls and arc toward her. As it drew closer, Monique saw that it was human-sized, and on a trajectory toward her car. Moments later, the figure touched down gently and Monique rolled down her window in mute amazement. A nova stood before her. A nova had actually *approached* her in person. She wondered if she were in trouble already, or if maybe she should get out of the car and bow.

"Is everything okay?" the nova asked, flashing straight, white teeth in a friendly grin. "I was just catching some breakfast when I saw you stop. Thought you might be having car problems."



Monique blinked and just stared at the figure leaning down to eye level with her. The nova was a man. He was athletic and very well built, but no taller than five and a half feet. His smooth, perfect face beamed with a radiance that seemed just a tad brighter than the dawn light should have allowed. Though it was early, the man was already dressed in an expensive-looking suit, tailored to accentuate and allow for his muscular build. Monique just stared.

"Is everything all right?" the young man asked.

"I'm new," Monique said, too stunned by the reality of speaking to an actual nova in person. "I'm moving in today."

Realization brightened the nova's face, and his smile grew even friendlier; more genuine. "Oh, you must be Doctor Brown! The welcoming committee and the block leaders aren't expecting you until noon. I'm Leland Cornwall."

"Pleased to meet you," Monique said, thinking with dawning pride, *I was expected?* "My furniture's coming in at noon, and I wanted to get here early and start laying out rooms in my mind before then."

The nova crouched beside the door to more easily maintain eye contact. "Yeah, these days, I'm an early riser myself. I'm visiting family between assignments, but I'm still on Paris time."

"You have family here?" Monique asked, amazed that she could still make small talk. How did a glorified spin-doctor relate to someone who could fly?

"Yeah, my sister's actually working with the welcoming committee," the nova said. "I'm not supposed to tell you this, but they're planning on surprising you with dinner and a basket of housewarming presents around six or so this evening. They've been working really hard, so try to act surprised when they show

up." The nova shrugged, even blushing a bit. It was truly unimaginable, seeing a striding demigod of Earth blushing in front of her. "I'm normally not such a tattle-tale, but I figured since you're up so early, it might be a good thing to make sure you'd be awake when they get there."

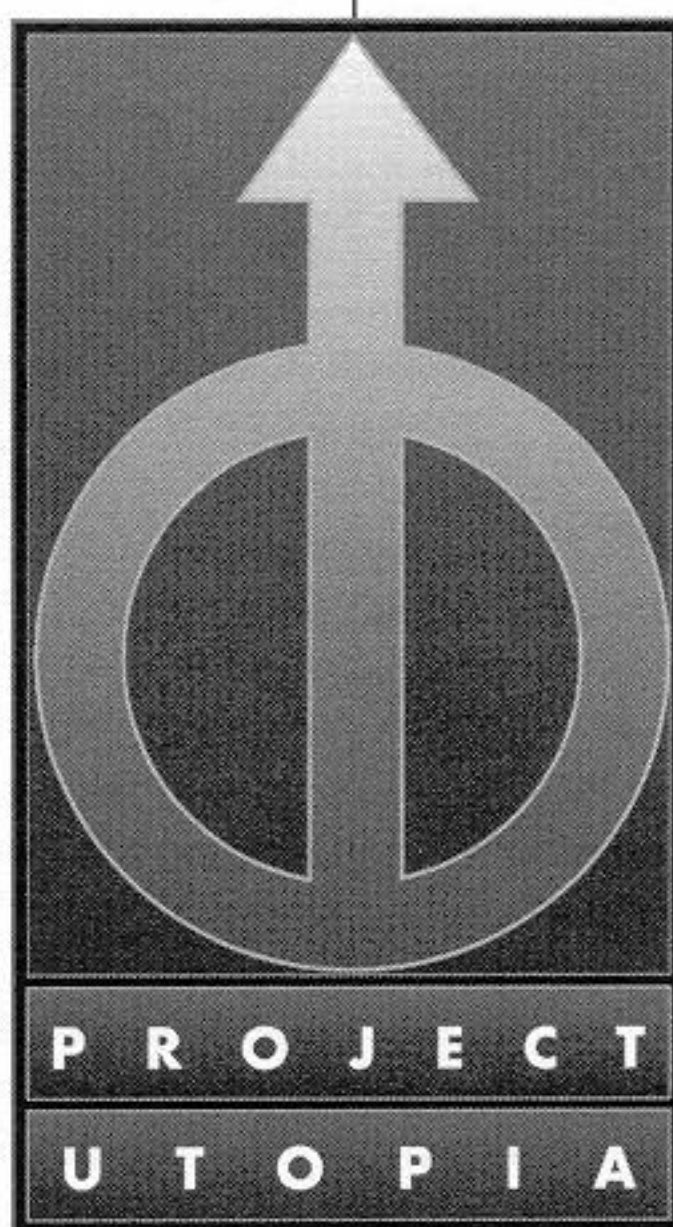
"Well, I certainly will be now," Monique said, dazed. Her neighbors were (eagerly) expecting her. They had planned her a surprise housewarming party already. Her new job started tomorrow, but her bosses were already intimately familiar with — and impressed by — her work. A nova (could he be from Team Tomorrow? she tried to go through the rosters of the various T2M teams). had come out to meet her because she seemed to be having car trouble. Her head swam, and she gripped the steering wheel until her knuckles paled.

"You okay?" the nova asked.

"Yes," Monique said at last. "It's just a bit much to take in. You know... all of it."

The nova's eyes twinkled and he gave Monique a knowing smile. "And it's only the first day, Doctor Brown. I bet you can't wait until you start working with the rest of the public-opinion specialists on the team." Then, seeming to glow a little brighter, the nova stood and said, "I'll stop by tonight to see how the move-in's going. Take care, Doctor." With a quick, friendly nod, the nova lifted gracefully back into the air, disappearing down the road over Century Gardens' ornate stone wall. Monique watched him go in transfixed awe.

Moments later, she edged her car back onto the road and made her way toward the rising sun and the gates of her new home. As the nova had said, she suddenly couldn't wait to start her new job.



INTRODUCTION

So, you want to be one of the good guys? This is the book you're looking for, hero. **Project Utopia** details the organization that most legitimately seeks to help the human race as a whole. While nothing in the world of **Aberrant** is all black or all white, Project Utopia was founded by the altruistic Aeon Society and is led by the idealistic and very charming Justin J. Laragione. The agents of Project Utopia are as close to being the good guys as you're going to get in a realistic setting. Dedicated to curing world hunger, wiping out disease and eradicating organized crime, Project Utopia tries to be everybody's friend. That's not to say they're naive — Utopia outgrew its naiveté before the millennium even turned — but it's the organization with the most hope, the most ambition and the fewest ulterior motives. In the world of **Aberrant**, that alone is enough to let Utopia be the good guys.

How to Use this Book

Aberrant: Project Utopia is a supplement for **Aberrant**, meant to provide players and Storytellers with insights and ideas into what it means to be a part of the enormous organization. Although the material herein can be used to flesh out any **Aberrant** series, hopefully it'll inspire you to don the white hat for a while and fight for truth, justice and generous licensing agreements.

Chapter 1: Genesis provides a look behind the scenes into the making of what may well be the most powerful institution ever on the face of the planet. This chapter includes information on the founding of Team Tomorrow, Utopia's high and low points, and its ties to the noble Aeon Society.

Chapter 2: Structure & Goals gives you the organization and hierarchy of Project Utopia, from its idealistic Director Justin J. Laragione to its terraformation of Ethiopia and the reviled S&T Division, which polices the world for "inappropriate and unauthorized technology."

Chapter 3: Team Tomorrow gives you the scoop on the **Aberrant** world's favorite icons of noble public service: recruitment, training schedules, Code of Honor, behavioral guidelines and hierarchy in the four teams.

Chapter 4: External Relations tells you whom Project Utopia gets along with, whom they're gunning for and who's looking to take them down.

Chapter 5: Project Proteus finally reveals the inner workings of the section that is tasked with carrying out Utopia's uglier operations.

Chapter 6: Storytelling gives you an array of ideas for incorporating Project Utopia, Team Tomorrow and Project Proteus into your own series. Some are four-color approaches, others could best be described as...alternative.

Appendix: This is where you'll find the stats for a number of Team Tomorrow members, Proteus dupes, Utopia cogs and others. We also take this opportunity to reveal some nifty new powers — as demonstrated by Project Utopia's and Team Tomorrow's foremost nova operatives — that your character might just wind up with upon her own eruption.

Lexicon

Aeon Society: A philanthropic organization founded in 1923 by Maxwell Mercer and his circle of extraordinary cohorts. Originally a private club for adventurers, it eventually became a philanthropic organization in the late 1930s, and gained great renown in the world arena during the 1980s and 1990s for its good works. The Society worked with the UN to form Project Utopia in 1998.

Bahrain Facility: Ostensibly, Project Utopia's research facility for studying Taint. In actuality, it's Project Proteus' stronghold where the group holds and studies novas who are deemed incorrigibly criminal, antisocial, excessively Tainted or otherwise dangerous. The facility is on the island of Bahrain (26° 0'N, 50° 35'E), located between Saudi Arabia and the Qatari Peninsula.

Project Proteus: A shadowy division of Project Utopia created to deal with issues and tasks in Project Utopia's mission statement that are deemed inappropriate for public consumption. Proteus is highly secret; those who know the name and mention it indiscriminately tend to disappear.

Rashoud Facility: Any of Project Utopia's several labs that serve as intake and training centers

for newly erupted novas. Most cities with populations over two hundred thousand will have one.

Teragen: A loose-knit organization of novas led by Divis Mal who believe in the Null Manifesto's doctrine that *Homo sapiens novus* is something other than human and should therefore not be bound by baseline law.

Terraforming: The practice of turning "lost" land (e.g., deserts or wasteland) into ecologically sound fertile, arable acreage.

T2M: Team Tomorrow, a Project Utopia-sponsored group of highly trained novas that maintains global stability, promotes world peace, combats organized crime, apprehends nova criminals and per-

forms public-relations functions for the Project.

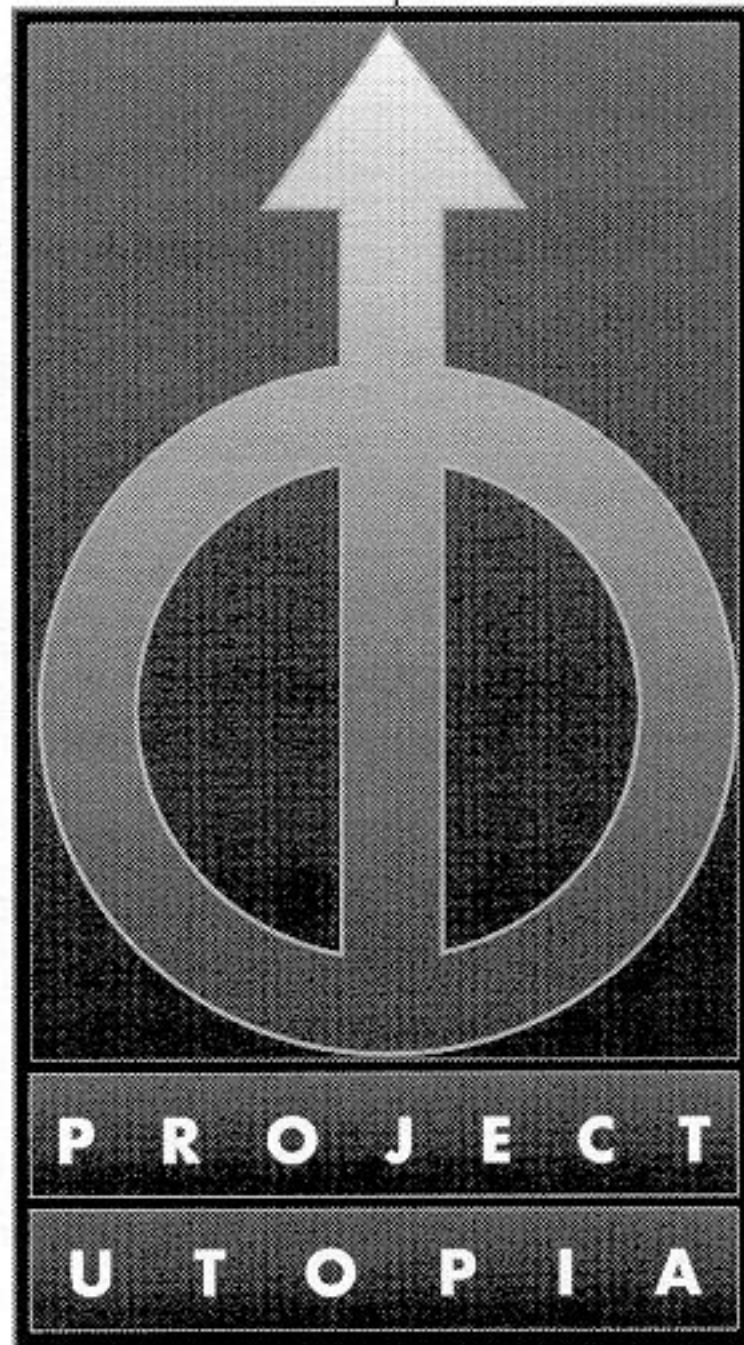
T2M-A/P: Team Tomorrow Asia/Pacific, based on Talaud Island, Indonesia (4° 30' N, 127° 10' E) and headed by Splash.

T2M-Am: Team Tomorrow Americas, based in Mexico City, Mexico, and headed by Ricardo Montoya-Bernal.

T2M-C: Team Tomorrow Central, based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and headed by Caestus Pax.

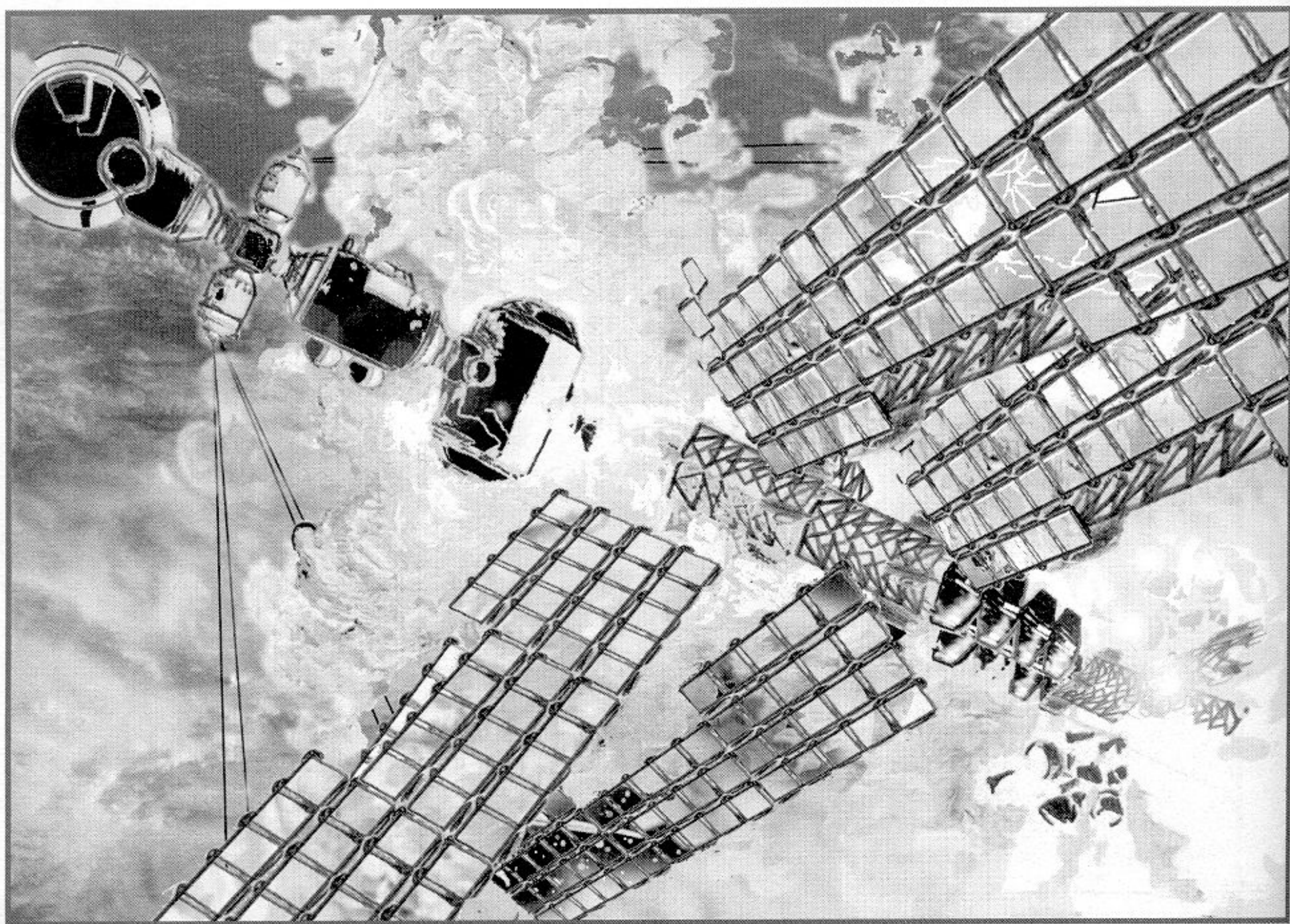
T2M-E or T2M-Eu: Team Tomorrow Europe, based in Venice, Italy, and headed by Thorn.

S&T: Science & Technology, the Project Utopia division responsible for policing potentially dangerous or disruptive technologies.



The First Two Months

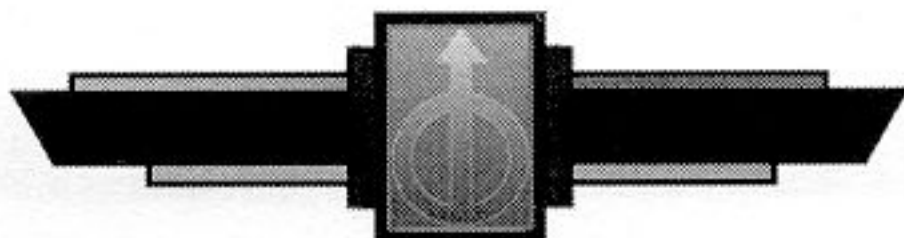
As the residual radiation from the *Galatea* disaster spread around the globe and slowly fell to Earth, officials in almost every country continued to receive reports of the eruption of novas (then known as “paranormals”). Some nations, such as Sweden, Canada and the United States, established interim agencies to deal with the situation and encouraged the new “paranormals” to report to those agencies for evaluation and testing. Others, such as China and Yemen, tried to imprison or expel as many of them as possible.



The period immediately following the *Galatea* disaster was a time of great tension. Many governments were unsure what to make of the rash of natural disasters and the people who seemed to be causing them; some accused political rivals or enemy states of causing the problems (or at least of fomenting them). A few skirmishes were fought, but no major battles. Unable to verify the nature or exact cause of the problem and thus to evaluate it, the United States remained at DefCon 3; other nations, including Great Britain and Germany, maintained similar states of alert.

Scientists, meanwhile, had begun to study the phenomena of the “paranormals.” Although their efforts were ham-

pered by the fact that few of these high-powered individuals were willing to submit to laboratory tests and the like, reputable scientific organizations were able to find enough cooperative volunteers (such as the Fireman himself) to engage in preliminary studies and make some findings. In an article based on their initial studies by a large team of scientists, published jointly in *Nature*, *The Lancet* and the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, they declared the paranormals to be a subspecies of humanity, which they unofficially christened *Homo sapiens novus*. Based on this tentative taxonomic designation, scientists and laymen alike started to refer to the paranormals as “novas.”





WING-XAO JI (TRANSLATED FROM THE CHINESE): MY POWERS INVOLVE THE MANIPULATION OF LOW-LEVEL MAGNETIC ENERGIES AND FORCES. AT THE TIME I WAS EMPLOYED AS A DATA-ENTRY SPECIALIST FOR THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT. WHEN I ERUPTED, THE PULSE OF MAGNETIC ENERGY DESTROYED THE MEMORY OF EVERY COMPUTER IN MY DEPARTMENT!



MIKE WALLACE: WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

WJ: MY SUPERVISOR SENT ME HOME, OF COURSE. I WAS ONLY THERE FOR A FEW HOURS, UNABLE TO LEAVE DUE TO THE TERRIBLE HEADACHES I WAS FEELING. WHEN SEVERAL OFFICIALS FROM THE MILITARY VISITED ME, I WAS TAKEN AWAY TO A MILITARY HOSPITAL FOR OBSERVATION. WHEN I BEGAN TO GET BETTER AND DISPLAY MORE CONTROL OVER MY POWERS, THEY SENT ME TO A "TRAINING CAMP" WHERE GUARDS WATCHED OVER ME NIGHT AND DAY WHILE "TRAINERS" STUDIED ME AND MY POWERS.



MW: DID THEY TORTURE YOU?

WJ: YES. WHENEVER I REBELLED AGAINST THEIR CONSTANT TESTS AND EXERCISES, I RECEIVED ELECTRICAL SHOCKS. IF I TRIED TO ESCAPE, I WAS CAPTURED AGAIN AND BEATEN. THIS WENT ON FOR OVER TWO MONTHS. UNFORTUNATELY FOR THEM, THEIR TRAINING MADE ME STRONGER, GAVE ME MORE CONTROL OVER MY POWERS AND EVENTUALLY I WAS TOO STRONG FOR THEM TO HOLD. I ESCAPED AND FLED CHINA; I WILL NEVER RETURN THERE.



MW: MR. JI, LET ME ASK YOU TO LOOK AT A PHOTOGRAPH. [DISPLAYS PHOTOGRAPH] THIS IS A CHINESE GOVERNMENT PICTURE OF WHAT THEY CLAIM WAS A MILITARY BASE NEAR YINCHUAN. AS YOU CAN SEE, IT'S BEEN PRETTY BADLY DESTROYED, HASN'T IT?

WJ: YES.



MW: THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT CLAIMS THAT THREE DOZEN SOLDIERS WHO STAFFED THIS BASE WERE KILLED WHEN IT WAS DESTROYED. THIS IS THE BASE WHERE YOU WERE HELD, ISN'T IT? DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF RESPONSIBLE FOR THOSE DEATHS?



WJ: I CONSIDER MYSELF RESPONSIBLE FOR DEFENDING MYSELF, MR. WALLACE, NOTHING ELSE.

Aeon

The United Nations, responding with uncharacteristic swiftness and decisiveness, called several emergency sessions to explore the situation. Many member nations reported to the international body about the paranormals appearing within their borders, and the World Health Organization began keeping a crude catalog of these appearances. Unfortunately, the flood of data soon overwhelmed WHO, which had many other responsibilities. Some concern exists even today that in the initial flood of information, WHO overlooked, misplaced or lost valuable data about the nova phenomenon.

Into this breach stepped the Aeon Society, a well-established philanthropic organization best known for its support for environmental research, Third-World development projects and literacy campaigns. On April 12, the Director of the Society, Phillipa Lavielle, approached United Nations Secretary-general Kofi Annan and offered her organization's assistance "until the current crisis passes or

the United Nations is better able to handle the influx of data." Aeon proposed to locate and study novas both directly and indirectly. First, it would establish testing programs using its existing scientific facilities around the world. Novas who were willing to allow Aeon, an organization with an 80-year-long track record of performing charitable work and providing assistance to various governments, to examine them could report to one of these facilities. Second, Aeon would compile reports on other novas based on news reports, eyewitness observations and even some low-level surveillance. At no time would the human rights of any nova be infringed in any way.

Grateful for a chance to better organize the data and allow the UN to deal with more pressing nova matters, Annan agreed to Aeon's proposal. On May 1, 1998 Aeon announced this arrangement to the world and invited any novas interested in establishing an "open dialogue" with itself and the UN to contact it. Aeon offered testing services to help novas better understand the full extent of their powers.

Transcript from CNN

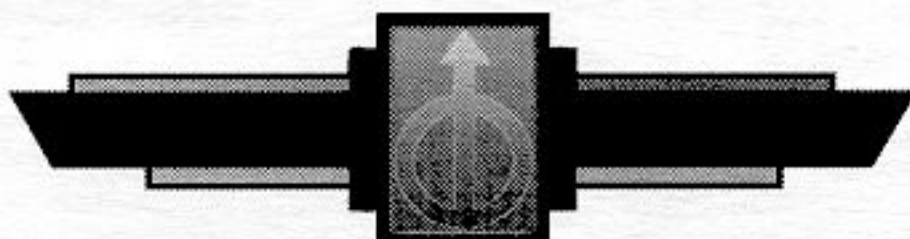
Transcript of CNN news report aired May 1, 1998

Announcer: Today, in what may prove to be an historic announcement, the United Nations revealed the formation of a partnership with the Aeon Society to study the so-called "nova problem." James Argent reports.

James Argent [reporting from United Nations headquarters in New York City]: For the past five weeks, the world has been rocked by continuing reports of the appearance of so-called "novas," individuals with truly remarkable abilities. People and governments around the world remain concerned about the problems and possibilities posed by these individuals. Today the United Nations, which has been holding emergency meetings regarding the situation since the crisis began, announced that it has recruited the Aeon Society to study novas and nova-related phenomena.

Phillipa Lavielle, Director of the Aeon Society: For the past 80 years, the Aeon Society has taken on some of the greatest challenges facing mankind: ending poverty, promoting peace and unity and advancing the frontiers of scientific and technological discovery. The society is now proud to offer its services to the newly emerged "novas" in an effort to help them understand their powers and use them responsibly. We invite all interested novas to enter into an open dialog with us by contacting Aeon through any of our local offices, or by calling our main office in New York City. We offer you our word that your human rights will be respected in every way and should you choose to remain anonymous for the moment, that's fine as well.

Annan and the General Assembly worked both in the media footlights and behind the scenes to rally support for Aeon's cause and to reassure nervous national governments and peoples that Aeon could handle the job. Many members protested the fact that the secretary-general had turned over control of an important aspect of the world's response to the "nova problem" to a private organization (philanthropic or otherwise). Once they saw how efficiently and effectively the Aeon Society handled its tasks, and that it completely and freely shared the data it gained through its efforts with the world, their protests mostly died away. However, even today, a few nations still argue against Aeon's relationship with the nova community through Project Utopia.



CHAPTER 1: THE GENESIS

Radio Transcript

Transcript of the syndicated *Jordan McDevitt Show*, a talk-radio program, aired May 16, 1998:

Jordan McDevitt: All right, we're back. Our topic of discussion today is novas. What are they? Do they pose a threat to humanity? Why is the UN so eager to work with them? Let's hit the phones. Our first caller is Mike from Poughkeepsie.

Mike from Poughkeepsie: You know what it is, don't you, Jor? The UN created those nova guys. They did it with the radiation from that satellite and stuff; it was all a part of this big plan of theirs, the explosion, the jetstream, everything. They're going to recruit them into their secret army and use them to conquer the world.

JM: Along with the black helicopters, right?

Mike: Right.

JM: Food for thought. Maybe Kevin from Decatur, Georgia can shed some light on the situation. Kevin?

Kevin from Decatur: Hi, Jor. Hoo-ah!

JM: Hoo-ah! What's on your mind about the novas, Kevin?

Kevin: Well, you know what I read? This woman who runs that Aeon Society, Phillipa Deville or whatever her name is? Seems she's had a "relationship" for years with some high muckety-muck at the UN — they're all in bed together in more ways than one. Get what I mean?

JM: Sure.

Kevin: So, I bet that has something to do with this deal of theirs. Did the UN ask the Red Cross to help out? Or set up an agency to work on the problem, like they usually do? No way! They let these Aeon people come in and take charge. It's probably some way for both of them to make money out of the deal and screw the rest of us.



The Zurich Accord

The United Nations did not, however, completely abandon the nova issue. Instead, it took the opportunity to refocus its efforts on aspects that Aeon could not deal with. First and foremost among these was the question of whether novas were "human," and thus entitled to the full panoply of human rights. Many nations, pointing to the tentative classification of *Homo sapiens novus*, claimed that novas were either human or, at worst, a "subspecies" of humanity and thus entitled to the full protection of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. Others, arguing in part that "human" means "human" and not some subspecies (particularly one evincing such obviously beyond-human-norm powers), stated their belief that no-

vas were a new species altogether (at least for purposes of the application of laws and legal privileges).

Excerpts from the Zurich Accord:

WHEREAS, all scientific evidence presently available indicates that the persons known as "novas" are, in fact, a subspecies of Humanity, *Homo sapiens*, tentatively designated *Homo sapiens novus*; and

WHEREAS, all persons, regardless of scientific designation or paranormal abilities, are entitled to dignity, respect and basic human rights;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT WE, THE MEMBERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS, declare that the persons known as "novas" are entitled to and shall receive the full entitlements and protections afforded to all people by the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

Weeks of often acrimonious debate about this and related issues eventually swayed most member states to the "novas are human" position espoused by most Western nations. The process culminated in the passage of the "Zurich Accord" by an overwhelming majority of members on June 30, 1998. The accord declared that novas were, in fact, human beings and thus possessed of human rights deserving of the full protection of the law. Civil libertarians

the world over hailed the accord as a triumph for the rights of human and nova alike. Several extremist regimes, including Iran, Syria, the Sudan and China, condemned the resolution and stated their refusal to abide by it.



CHAPTER 1: THE GENESIS

From the book *Dreaming of Erewhon: A History of Project Utopia*, by Alexander Seivers

The weeks following the passage of the Zurich Accord was a period of tumult and wonder. The Aeon Society and in particular Drs. Mazarin and Rashoud found their work increasing at a pace almost too great for them to match.

The questions posed by the eruption and existence of novas, not to mention their various powers, threatened to overwhelm the researchers. Although its facilities were advanced, Aeon was not equipped for the sort of long-term scientific study and crisis management that the "nova problem" now demanded.

The solution, proposed by Aeon after extensive consultation with the United Nations, was the creation of a new organization under the auspices of Aeon, with substantial involvement by and guidance from the UN. They called this brainchild *Project Utopia*.

The aims and goals that Aeon and the UN envisioned for Utopia were, at least in theory, simple and straightforward. First, the project was supposed to study ways in which nova powers could be employed for the betterment of all mankind — everything from protecting the planet from asteroid collisions, to building dams and housing in Third-World nations, to advancing scientific research in all fields. Second, it was to explore the nature of nova existence and the variety of their powers, to find ways to help novas whose powers inflicted harm upon those around them. Third, Project Utopia was to use nova powers and other means to preserve, maintain and improve the quality of the global environment. Fourth — and this goal was not widely discussed — Project Utopia intended to find ways to control novas who defied the law or evinced antisocial behavior. Since it was widely believed that, ultimately, only novas could stop other novas from causing harm and destruction, in the minds of Phillipa Lavielle and the other leaders of the Aeon Society, this goal really fell under the heading of using nova powers to help humanity.

On August 13, 1998, Director Lavielle and Secretary-general Annan announced the formation of a new private foundation, Project Utopia, at a press conference in New York City. At that time they stated, in a phrase repeated in every newspaper in the world, that Project Utopia's goal was "to utilize the vast powers of novas to better the quality of life for all, human and nova alike, on planet Earth." They outlined an ambitious multi-point agenda for fulfilling

that goal, including using co-operating novas to: build schools, water-treatment plants and similar facilities in several impoverished nations; clean up environmental disasters such as Prince William's Sound in Alaska; and curb terrorism and international organized crime. The last program was deemed necessary for, among other reasons, public-relations purposes. The public in the United States and elsewhere seemed to expect the comic-book-hero-like novas to do comic-book-hero-like things.

Perhaps the most important Utopian initiative announced that day was the so-called "intervention" program. Its stated goal was to approach newly erupted novas and offer them training, medical assistance and anything else they needed to "take control of their powers before their powers take control of them." The world had already witnessed what novas could do when they used their powers for their own selfish ends, or simply lost control of the immense energies coursing through their bodies. Project Utopia would

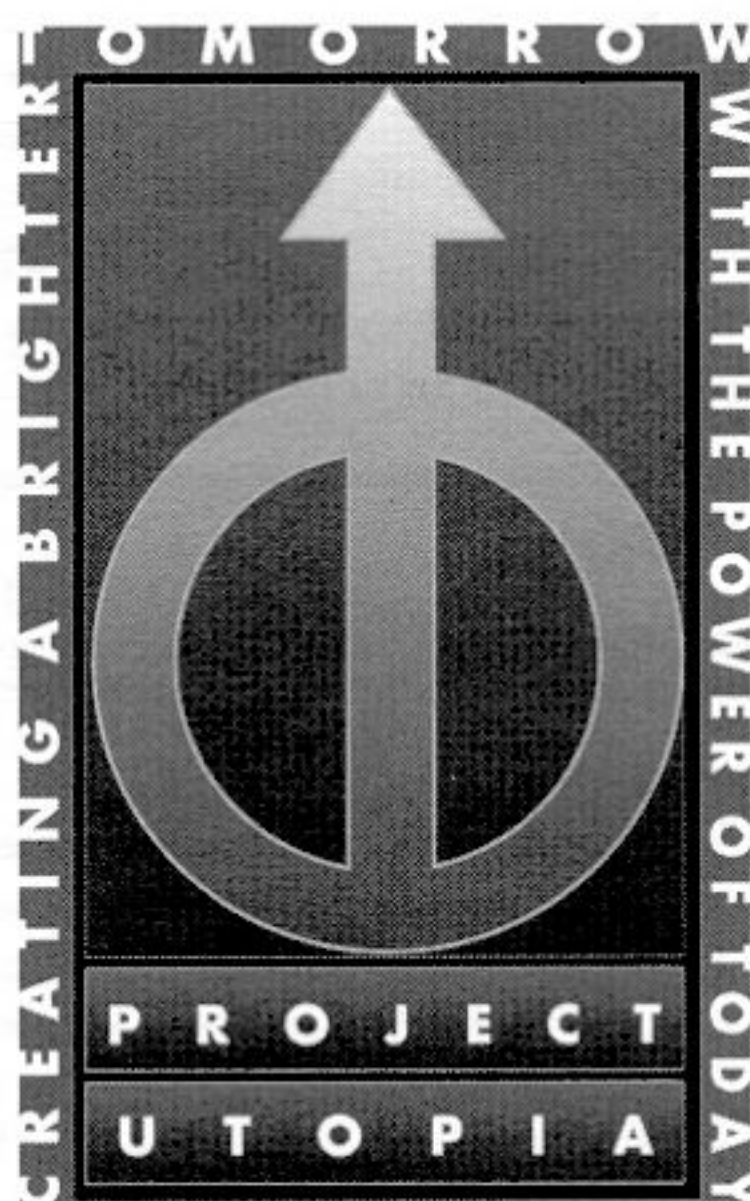
approach new novas and offer them not only membership in the project, but the opportunity to learn as much as possible about their powers and how to use them. Novas who joined would receive a substantial salary, significant benefits and the thanks of a grateful world.

The Two Doctors

Lavielle and Annan also announced that the project's headquarters would be in New York City and that its first

The Project Utopia Seal

At the first Project Utopia press conference, Lavielle and Annan also revealed the project's seal. It depicted the circle of humanity being guided upward by its nova members. Surrounding that icon was the project's now well-known motto: "Creating a Brighter Tomorrow with the Power of Today."



CHAPTER 1: THE GENESIS

director, who would answer to Aeon's directors, would be Justin J. Laragione, a former high-ranking Coast Guard officer and lawyer working for the U.S. government. However, despite Laragione's nominal position as head of the organization, most observers understood that those who would call the shots were its chief researchers, Drs. Henri Mazarin and Farah Rashoud. The two doctors were in charge of Utopia's research, testing, recruitment and training programs, which were clearly the backbone of the organization. Without a corps of novas willing to work for it and to undergo its scientific tests, Project Utopia would be little more than a bold idea. Thanks to their new position, Mazarin and Rashoud — having already established themselves as leaders in the field of nova research ("novology," as some dubbed it) — were poised to take even greater steps — steps that would lead them to the Nobel Prize.

Initial Recruitment

Following the Project Utopia announcement, several prominent novas immediately volunteered for service with the new organization. Many were attracted by the project's altruistic goals; they wanted to use their powers for the greater good and this seemed like the best way to do so. Still others found the salary and benefits package attractive. Where else could they earn an eight-figure salary for doing good deeds and becoming media superstars?

Some of the earliest project recruits included:

- Shelby "Caestus Pax" Eisenfaust, a powerful nova with abilities relating to flight, extreme speed and the projection, control and manipulation of kinetic energy
- Steve Debow, a hyper-intelligent nova with a background in marketing
- Spencer "Antaeus" Balmer, a research ecologist from Manchester, England
- Anthony "Lightning" Chang, a Toronto teenager with the ability to project bolts of electricity and absorb electrical energy into his body
- Trudy Vandermann, a telepath and telekinetic

As more novas continued to erupt, Mazarin and Rashoud struggled to understand the origin and nature of nova powers. The world entered a state of breathless anticipation as it waited to find out: Can anyone do this? Are nova powers available to all humans, or just to a specific group — a new subspecies of humanity? Is this the next step in human evolution, or the end of humanity's long tenure on planet Earth?

Step by steps, scientists learned more and more about humanity's quantum-powered brethren. By October of 1998, the term "baseline" had been coined to differentiate humans without nova powers from those who possessed them. More than one person resented the term, which implied (to them, at least) a lesser state of evolution or ability than novas — as if normal humans were some sort of "breeding stock" from which novas finally emerged.

Radio Transcript

Transcript of the syndicated *Jordan McDevitt Show*, a talk-radio program, aired October 26, 1998:

Jordan McDevitt: So what do you think, listeners? Baseline — insult or accurate? We're taking your calls here at 1-888-TALK-OUT. First up on our hit parade: Charles from Abilene, Kansas.

Charles from Abilene: What's so wrong with "baseline"? It's just a scientific term. No one intends any insult by it or anything. The UN and everyone else says that novas are humans, just like you and me. They're not a different species, so we can't call them something else, right? So the scientists have to have some way of differentiating between us and them besides saying, "the super-powered guys" all the time. There's no reason to get all bent outta shape over it.

JM: Okay, thanks for calling in. Here's Phil from Mobile with the flip side:

Phil from Mobile: I find the whole term insulting, personally. I know these nova guys are stronger and tougher and faster than me and all that — do the eggheads have to rub it in by describing me as some sort of lowest common denominator? Why can't they just call us "humans" and them "novas," and keep it at that?



From the introduction to *Nova Powers and Physiology*.

Subtitled "Initial Findings and Observations," this report by Drs. Henri Mazarin and Farah Rashoud was released to the media on December 4, 1998 in conjunction with a more formal report published the same day in the scientific journal *Nature*:

"It is our conclusion, after months of rigorous investigation and testing, that novas are, in fact, a subspecies of humans. We suggest the formal adoption of the proposed taxonomic classification *Homo sapiens novus*, to denote the Quantum manipulating sub-race and *Homo sapiens sapiens* to denote the main branch of humanity. As subspecies, the two should have little or no difficulty interbreeding, though we cannot say, at this time, whether the offspring would possess the ability to manipulate quantum.

What differentiates novas from *Homo sapiens sapiens*, is the presence of a lump of tissue located between the two hemispheres of the brain, in front of and slightly above the *corpus collosum*. This *node*, as we refer to it, is typically about the size of an acorn — about a centimeter in diameter. The node produces many heretofore-unknown neurotransmitters, which we believe to be responsible, in some way, for the quantum manipulation abilities of *Homo sapiens novus*. The size of the node varies widely from sub-

ject to subject. According to our preliminary observations, the larger the node, the greater the extent and/or magnitude of a nova's powers.

During times of great stress, typically during or after the onset of puberty, the increased flow of various hormones and neurotransmitters, especially adrenaline, through the brain causes the node to manifest — "erupt," in popular parlance — and only then is it apparent that the *Homo sapiens sapiens* is actually *Homo sapiens novus*.

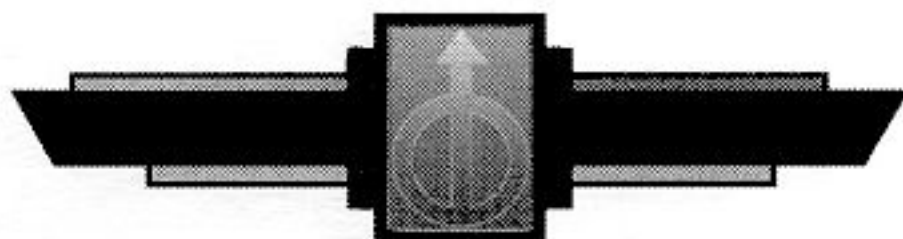
The exact nature and mechanisms of nova abilities must be the focus of greater study, but our preliminary conclusion is that nova powers involve the manipulation of the basic quantum forces of the universe: electromagnetism, gravity and the strong and weak nuclear forces. Our tests indicate that the node allows a nova to manipulate these quantum forces in specific ways, thus causing them to manifest their powers. According to this theory, the nodes of all novas who manifest extreme strength and durability should have significant similarities. The larger a nova's node, the more quantum force he can manipulate and more easily.

While the quantum nature of nova powers such as electricity generation, gravity manipulation, projected magnetic force and the like seems obvious, what remains unanswered at present is how some novas convert that energy into fire, ice, the ability to fly or any of dozens of other powers which bear little resemblance to the classic forces of physics.

Project Utopia Press Release

A Project Utopia press release, dated December 4, 1998

We here at Project Utopia, where the best of humanity works for the betterment of all mankind, are pleased to recognize the official adoption of the *Homo sapiens novus* taxonomic classification for the people popularly known as "novas." The groundbreaking work of Drs. Mazarin and Rashoud, associates of this foundation, in discovering the "Mazarin-Rashoud node" and showing that novas are, biologically, human just goes to prove what we at Project Utopia have known all along: that we are all brothers and anything that benefits one of us, benefits us all.



CHAPTER 1: THE GENESIS

General News Release

Triton Foundation Donates \$10 Million To Nova Research

NEW YORK, December 8, 1998 (AP) — The non-profit pharmaceutical research foundation called Triton announced today that it would donate an unprecedented 10 million dollars to Project Utopia to fund further research into issues pertaining to novas by Drs. Henri Mazarin and Farah Rashoud.

"The Triton Foundation is pleased to be able to support Drs. Mazarin's and Rashoud's research," said Justin Gill, Triton Foundation CEO. "The foundation feels that this research is not only vital for understanding the issues posed by the existence of novas, but that it advances the frontiers of biochemistry and pharmaceuticals in inestimable ways. All mankind benefits from the project's research on the biology of novas and we at Triton are proud to assist in advancing such research."

Based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the Triton Foundation is one of the world's largest pharmaceutical research firms. Established in 1994 by the Aeon Society, which merged several smaller firms to create one large company with expertise in many different biological disciplines, Triton has been on the forefront of the pharmaceutical sciences since that time.

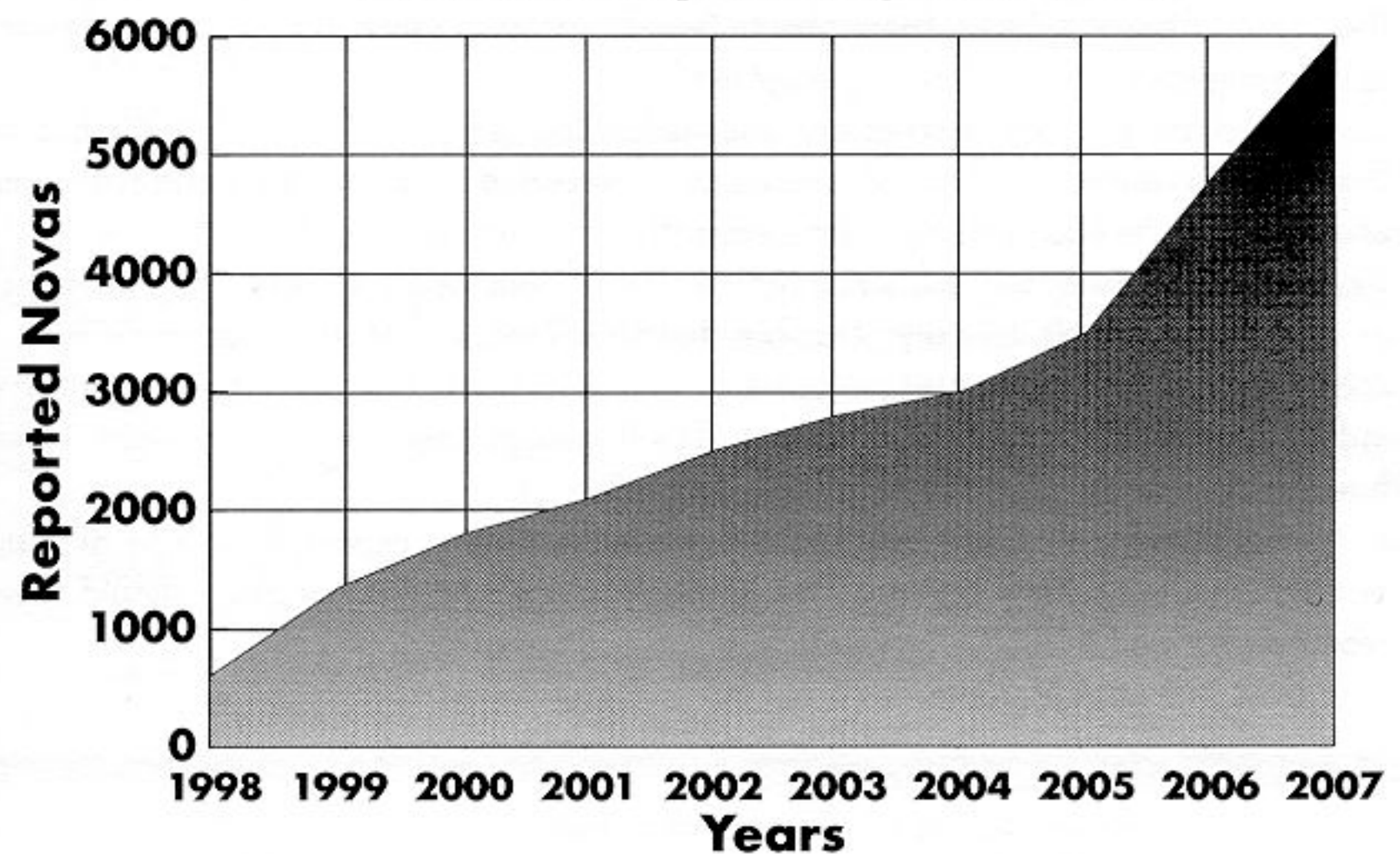
Aeon Society Census

The Aeon Society Census of Novas and Nova Activity

Since 1998, the Aeon Society, parent of Project Utopia, has issued a year end report summarizing the known numbers, names and quantum abilities of novas throughout the world, including information on all major news items for the year pertaining to novas or nova activity. Initially the project of Aeon's Current Events Analysis Bureau, it has since grown to the point where a new section of the organization, the Nova Census Bureau, was created for the express purpose of publishing it each year.

According to the Census, the following numbers of novas were known to exist as of December 31 in each of the following years:

1998: 600
1999: 1,350
2000: 1,800
2001: 2,100
2002: 2,500
2003: 2,800
2004: 3,000
2005: 3,500
2006: 4,800
2007: 6,000

Nova Activity Through the Years

The Early Years: 1999-2002

From the book *Dreaming of Erewhon: A History of Project Utopia*, by Alexander Seivers

1999 was a year of great highs and even greater lows. Despite the continued fall of the radiation levels resulting from the *Galatea* disaster, the rate of nova eruption remained constant. By year's end the number of known novas was slightly more than double the reported total at the end of 1998.

TOP SECRET/NOFORN/ORCON

TOP SECRET/NOFORN/ORCON

To: Director of Central Intelligence

From: Bill Masters, Directorate of Science & Technology

Date: December 13, 1999

Re: Relation of *Galatea* Incident to Nova Eruptions

Popular belief and even the opinions of many officials and scientists, attribute the sudden appearance of "novas," and the development of the Mazarin-Rashoud node by what amounts to, according to the most recent figures, approximately 1,300 human beings, to the *Galatea* disaster of March 23, 1998. However, I believe that we should not close our eyes to the possibility that some other agency for this sudden transformation exists.

While the *Galatea* explosion and the subsequent irradiation of most of Earth's biosphere, was definitely a tragedy, its role in the creation of the novas could be seen as suspect, for several reasons. First, there have been many incidents prior to this time when human beings were exposed, in large or small groups, to massive amounts of radiation — amounts equal to or greater than those created by the *Galatea* disaster. Indeed, the U.S. Army conducted experiments along these lines in the 1940s and '50s. However, none of those incidents caused the subjects to develop M-R nodes or nova powers of any kind; their results were either negligible or deleterious.

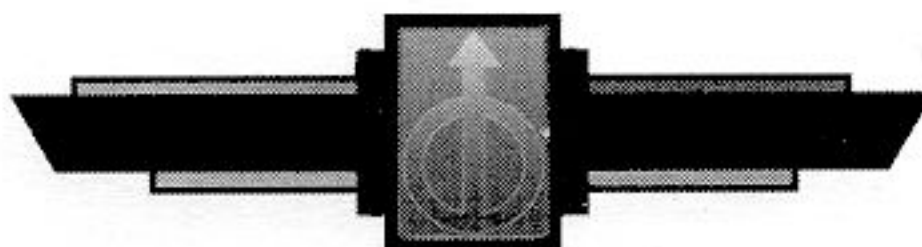
Second, while the levels of *Galatea*-spawned radiation in the atmosphere have decreased steadily over the past 21 months, the rate of nova eruption has remained more or less steady — following an initial boom in April and May of 1998, eruptions have remained at a level of approximately 50-60 per month. If *Galatea* radiation were the cause of the eruptions, there should have been many more at first and far fewer now, unless there's some sort of delaying mechanism inhibiting eruptions.

Third, the pattern of eruptions does not follow the pattern of *Galatea* radiation flow (see attached diagram). During the initial boom of eruptions, many occurred in New York City and surrounding areas in the United States and Canada, which is partially consistent with radiation fallout patterns. However, the radiation has spread around the world to varying degrees since then, but eruptions occur all over the planet with roughly equal distribution.

In short, I think it highly plausible that the *Galatea* explosion was some sort of cover. After it occurred, an unknown person or person(s) released, by means similarly unknown, some agent that triggered these changes. My initial guess would be that it's some sort of biological or chemical warfare agent. However, that begs the question of how all areas of the world were affected equally.

I believe that further study of this issue is necessary, especially in light of your questions regarding creation of novas in a laboratory setting. The attached budgetary appropriation should cover necessary expenses for this research during FY 2000.

Best wishes to Marlene.



CHAPTER 1: THE GENESIS

New York Times Letters Page

From a letter to the editor published in the *New York Times*, January 12, 1999.

"Rashoud" facilities? Recruiting facilities is more like it.

Does anyone out there honestly think that this lab, or the ones that are supposed to follow it, were set up by Project "Utopia" out of the goodness of its heart? That it just has the welfare of the people of the world at stake? If so, then I've got a bridge to sell you over in Brooklyn.

Isn't it obvious what they're doing? Can't you see it? *They're building an army.* Project Utopia controls more novas than any other group on the planet — even the U.S. government. Each one of those novas is stronger, faster and more powerful than a battalion of soldiers. And now they've set up a "recruiting station" right down on 5th Avenue.

And God help us, we're letting them do it.

We're letting them build their little cadres of super-warriors with our own brothers and sisters. When the time comes they'll roll over us like a car squashing a bug.

Letting them set up their "satellite lab" here in the city is just the first step towards Armageddon. Wake up, people! We've got to get rid of that "lab" *now* and not let them build anymore! If anyone should be recruiting American novas, it should be the American government.

The response to the opening of the lab and to Caestus Pax's message that Project Utopia was looking for new nova recruits, caused a tremendous stir. Novas came from all over the city, state and continent to apply; a few even flew in (sometimes under their own power) from other continents. Most of them were accepted into Project Utopia, but not into Team Tomorrow (at least not initially). Some were rejected for psychological reasons (e.g., not wholeheartedly supporting Utopia's goals), but the project needed nova power to fulfill its goals. Utopia knew that even the greenest, youngest novas could become excellent tools for building mankind's better future, and the best (and most telegenic) of the new recruits would eventually become Team Tomorrow members.

From Collapse To Confederation: The Rise of the New Russia and the World Economy, by Anatoly Bezpatzlov.

Many analysts have attributed the self-destruction of the old Russian economy and state to various factors: the devaluation of the ruble, the prevalence of organized crime in Russian life at the turn of the millennium, the clumsy and misguided attempt to convert Russia's socialist economy to a market economy but no one argues about which event finally caused the house of cards to come tumbling down.

On February 18, 1999, while on his way to a meeting with economic advisors, President Boris Yeltsin of the Commonwealth of Independent States died of a heart attack. Despite the fact that Yeltsin had been plagued by a protracted series of illnesses, few expected him to die so suddenly, without nam-

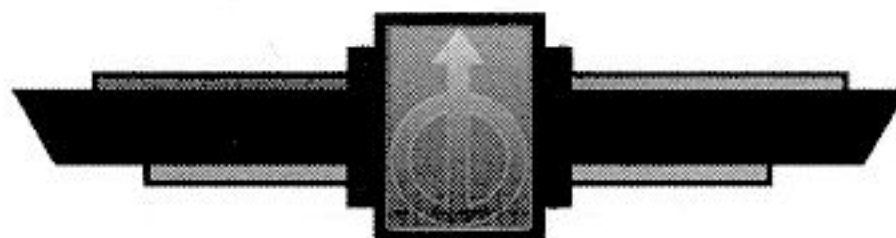
ing a favorite who would likely succeed him. The result was instant turmoil. Yevgeni Primakov, Vladimir Zhirinovsky and over a dozen others immediately began jockeying for power, calling in favors to try to ensure their "election" to the presidency. Well over half of them, possibly all, had ties to the *organizatsiya*, the Russian organized-crime syndicates.

Within just a few hours, the entire Russian economy collapsed, along with much of the country's political infrastructure. The ripples from the "Moscow Crash" spread throughout the world markets at the speed of electronic computer blips and the market, already weakened by the various Asian collapses of some months before, couldn't stand the strain. Like dominoes, the economies of one country after another plunged into the abyss right behind Russia. The Dow Jones Industrial Average posted a 2,000-point loss by the close of business that day, the worst economic collapse in the history of the New York Stock Exchange. Overnight the entire world entered the deepest recession in world history.

The World Bank and International Monetary Fund responded the next day, calling for temporary freezes on all international loan payments and urging other stringent damage-control measures. Currency, commodity and stock markets all closed for the rest of the week to prevent further hemorrhaging of capital. The G7 nations, including the United States, instituted emergency price controls.

Nova Aid

The emergency measures did little but slow the rate of collapse. By the end of April, world unemployment had quadrupled, with rates of new homelessness and starvation following close behind. The only bright spots in the disaster



were Project Utopia, its parent the Aeon Society and other philanthropic organizations. On March 1, Project Utopia offered the assistance of Team Tomorrow, its other nova recruits and the rest of its staff and resources to assist with relief work, with requests given priority based on Utopia's perception of the relative needs involved. It also informed the world that the novas in its research departments were working on possible solutions to the economic crisis as fast as they could. This gave most world markets their first non-loss day in over a week.

General News Release

Utopia Constructs Moscow Housing Shelter in a Day

Novas Put Powers To Work, House the Homeless

MOSCOW, March 3, 1999 (AP) — Yesterday, members of Team Tomorrow, along with other novas associated with Project Utopia, began and completed the construction of a 500-bed homeless shelter in downtown Moscow. The novas demolished several nearby abandoned buildings prior to beginning their construction work to obtain basic building supplies, then erected brick walls and other structural supports in place. With the assistance of local construction supervisors and building inspectors, the team took less than a day to build an entire 500-bed facility. Donations from the Aeon Society, corporations including Microsoft, Daimler-Benz and several other organizations will supply and staff the shelter within a week.

"We're pleased to be able to extend this helping hand to the people of Russia, who've suffered so much since the death of President Yeltsin," said Team Tomorrow leader Caestus Pax. "The poor social and political circumstances here started the world recession and there's no way we're going to get the world economy back on its feet without correcting the root problems too."



CHAPTER 1: THE GENESIS

Utopia's novas immediately went to work helping to distribute food, potable water and other perishable supplies to areas left without basic economic service by the collapse. They also built shelters, got utilities working in areas where they'd been shut down and performed many other relief missions. All told, it ranks as the most successful relief effort in world history. For the first time ever, the aid went *directly* to the individuals in need, with no bureaucrats, officials or generals delaying it for political reasons or siphoning most of it into their own bank accounts.

The Food Riots

Unfortunately, even a team of novas can't feed every hungry person in the world. The planet-wide economic collapse caused the distribution of goods and services to grind to a halt in many regions. The result was food riots in many major Third- (and even First-) World cities. Team Tomorrow and other Utopian novas helped quell rioting in Karachi, London, Hong Kong, Sydney, Los Angeles and Vladivostok, and local novas or those associated with national governments helped stop other riots, usually with minimal harm or loss of life to the rioters.

Recovery

Fortunately, the world's economy proved as resilient as some forecasters had predicted all along. While hard times

continued for another year, by the second quarter of 2000 all major economic indicators were back up. The years that followed gave rise to the longest, strongest period of economic growth in world history and they show no signs of slowing. Much of the credit for this boom must, of course, be laid at the feet of Project Utopia, whose environmental and technological discoveries, spurred by the spark of nova researchers, have done so much to reverse the world's many ills.

The Russian Phoenix Awakes

Not even Russia, beset for nearly a century by corrupt leadership and poor economic planning, was immune to this progress. Beginning in early 2001, the Russian political leaders who had survived the destruction of the CIS — and the bloody infighting which followed it — met to negotiate the formation of a strong, newly unified Russia. With help from Project Utopia planners and advisors, their agenda progressed smoothly and on March 29 they declared the formation of the Russian Confederation of States, colloquially known as "RusCon." The prime architect of the Confederation and the astounding economic growth that followed was Vladimir Sierka, a nova "economic savant" who was immediately appointed Minister of the Treasury under the new Confederation President Andrei Srebrianski. Rumors persist to this day of strong, yet secret, ties between Sierka and Project Utopia, but both parties deny them.

From Modern Japan

From Modern Japan: From The End of World War II to the Present

(Excerpt from a documentary series first airing on the History Channel in November, 2005.)

The world economic recession of 1999 hit Japan harder than perhaps any other country. As a country dependent on manufactured goods exports for much of its economy and that had to import most of its raw materials, the virtual disappearance of many consumer markets and the collapse of distribution networks came as a devastating blow. In early June of that year, following pessimistic IMF announcements concerning the crisis, the Nikkei Index lost over half of its value in a single day. According to reports, over 2000 Japanese businessmen committed suicide that evening after the market closed. Even advice from Project Utopia's economic research teams, whose assistance had helped strengthen world economies (albeit at the cost of rampant inflation in some countries), seemed unable to mitigate Japan's economic woes.

After deteriorating for nearly six months, Japan's economy finally began to recover when the Prime Minister announced a program called *Saisho*, the "New Beginning." Instituted with the help of Project Utopia and the Aeon Society, *Saisho* involved government subsidies for high-tech industries that employed novas for research and development. The hope was that the involvement of novas, guided by advisors from Project Utopia, would lead to the creation of new, profitable technologies. As we shall see in part nine of this series, it was a gamble which would have a spectacular payoff.



CHAPTER 1: THE GENESIS

From *Time Magazine*

From "Utopia Bug Spray: Squashing the Y2K Bug," *Time Magazine*, January 10, 2000

Once again, Team Tomorrow has proven that its parent organization's motto — "Creating a Brighter Tomorrow with the Power of Today" — is a true one. Thanks to the effort of the team and Project Utopia's other novas, the Y2K bug proved to be less a plague of locusts than a few annoying gnats.

When the date rolled over to 2000, clocks in computer systems around the world rolled over as well. While a few went back to 1900, the vast majority were not affected by the so-called "Y2K Bug." Apple had solved the Y2K bug in its own computers decades before it became an issue, but other computer manufacturers were thrown into a panic. For computers running electricity plants, air-traffic control and flight-navigation programs and other crucial systems, the change posed a real danger.

That's where Team Tomorrow entered the picture. Where power systems failed or planes were caught in the air without guidance, members of Project Utopia's emergency team, augmented briefly by scores of other Utopian novas of all description, came to the rescue, bringing needed supplies or a helping hand (or telekinetic grip, or force field). All told, their worldwide efforts are credited with directly saving nearly a thousand lives and indirectly saving countless more.

While Project Utopia maintains the profile of a philanthropic organization that exists only to serve mankind, there's no denying that its nova team's efforts caused its popularity, already high, to skyrocket. According to surveys taken in the United States and many other countries, at least 95% of those who had heard of Project Utopia or Team Tomorrow "approved of the work they were doing" or "considered them one of the most beneficial organizations on Earth." — high praise for an organization not yet two years old.

Radio Transcript

Transcript of the syndicated *Jordan McDevitt Show*, a talk-radio program, aired January 23, 2000.

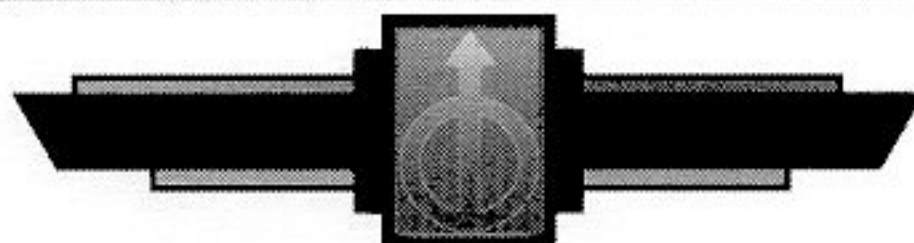
Jordan McDevitt: Hoo-ah! We're back, listeners. Our topic for today on the *Jordan McDevitt Show* is Project Utopia — threat or menace? You ask me, I'd have to say "both." We're talking about a group of people backed by the money of the Aeon Society — a private organization, remember, so it doesn't have to reveal just *where* its money comes from — and the power of Team Tomorrow and a whole boatload of other novas. *And they've got a 95% worldwide approval rating.* Think about it — the only other things with a 95% worldwide approval rating are fattening foods and caffeine and neither of them are any good for you, either. In case I have to spell it out for some of you, power plus fanatic approval spells T-R-O-U-B-L-E, folks.

And just who is it that's supposed to be looking over Utopia's shoulder? Well, again, Aeon, the group that runs it — a private organization that answers to no one — and the United Nations. *They're* certainly in a position to get things done, aren't they? In short, there's no one at the reins, folks; Project Utopia can run wherever it pleases.

What do you think? Call us here at 1-888-TALK-OUT and give us a piece of your mind. I see the phones are all lit up already, so let's start with Bruce from Jackson, Mississippi.

Bruce from Jackson: First off, you prick, you suck. You....

JM: Oops, I seem to have lost Bruce. Sorry about that, buddy. Next caller....



CHAPTER 1: THE GENESIS

From *New Millennium, New Environment: Project Utopia and Ecotransformation*, by Gerald Lang, Ph.D.

The impact of novas and specifically Project Utopia, on our world has, of course, been an enormous one. They've stopped organized crime and terrorism dead in their tracks; replaced outmoded communications systems with newer, faster ones; and helped Russia and the world recover from a devastating economic collapse but they have had the greatest impact on the environment. In short, they have prevented a planet from spiraling into ecological ruin.

Before you accuse me of being melodramatic, stop and think about the ravages that mankind inflicted upon his home planet before the novas erupted. We were choking our rivers, seas and lakes with pollutants. We were cutting down scores of acres, hundreds even, of rain forest every day. Species we hadn't even learned about were going extinct every year. Madagascar was so afflicted by clearcutting and erosion that her soil could be seen leaking into the ocean from outer space; add to that creeping desertification, never-ending smog alerts, ozone depletion, radioactive wastes...and the list of atrocities goes on.

And Project Utopia stopped it all. It hasn't brought all the problems completely under control, but it's done a lot more than slap a band-aid over them and call it a victory. They've actually *corrected* problems, rebuilt shattered ecosystems and cleaned up pollution. That's more than anyone who came before them ever did.

From the book *Dreaming of Erehwon: A History of Project Utopia*, by Alexander Seivers

Operation Clean Sweep

Although its avowed purpose — to use nova powers to benefit all mankind — would clearly seem to include environmental causes, Project Utopia's work on ecological problems didn't really get started (beyond the research stages) until the year 2000. On February 1 of that year, in the midst of the worldwide economic collapse, Project Utopia took the world's mind off its troubles for a few minutes by announcing Operation Clean Sweep. Clean Sweep was, to put it most succinctly, a project to clean up and repair the entire environment. Project Utopia declared war on pollution, deforestation, desertification, overfarming, overfishing, habitat loss, unnatural erosion and every other environmental malady.

At the time, Utopia's promises seemed far-fetched, a pie-in-the-sky dream. What we hadn't learned yet, but know now, is that Utopia rarely promises what it hasn't proven to itself, through laboratory modeling and other studies, that it can reasonably deliver. In short, they're not politicians, they're heroes. There are those who say that Operation Clean Sweep was just a cover-up, a way for Utopia to accomplish its "secret agenda" while smelling like a rose. To those people I say, look around you! The results are obvious in the clean water you drink and clean air you breathe. Not even Project Utopia would bother to accomplish all of this simply as a "cover operation"!

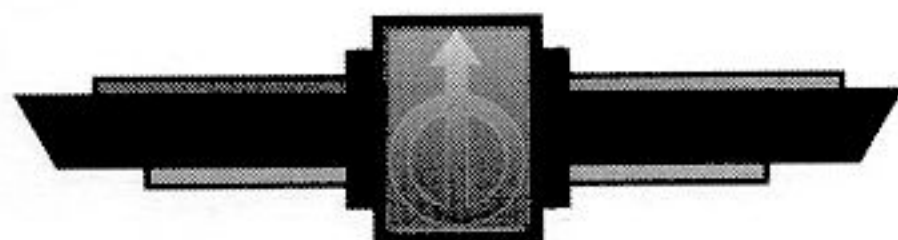
With the backing of its patron, the Aeon Society, Project Utopia got right to work recruiting allies for Operation Clean Sweep. Caestus Pax and other members of Team Tomorrow visited just about every member nation of the UN. Many members used the project as a justification for establishing public-works projects to help alleviate the massive unemployment brought on by the economic collapse. In fact, Project Utopia seems to have anticipated this; some analysts have even claimed it rushed its environmental plans to kill two birds with one stone. If so, no harm seems to have come from it; both the environment and the economy have recovered thanks to its efforts and those of civilian environmental crews.

Fixing the Sky

It didn't take long for Project Utopia to mobilize its forces and make some progress. Just a little over half a year later, it called another press conference. This time it announced, to the amazement of all but a few scientists who'd been monitoring its progress, that it had sealed the hole in the ozone layer! Not taken steps to fix, not shrunk, but sealed the hole. Team Tomorrow leader Caestus Pax described it this way:

"Our point persons on this project were Griffin Armstrong, one of Project Utopia's original recruits; Pratima Basham, the lovely controller of the skies; and Sten Johansson, a man with the remarkable ability to alter certain kinds of atoms. Between the three of them they rounded up most of the CFCs in the atmosphere, transmuted them into ozone and used that ozone to "seal" the hole. In a remarkably elegant back-up operation, ozone was taken from around cities, where it is a pollutant, and brought up to where it can do some good. Or at least that's how the scientists have explained it to me; I'm just a country boy from Kentucky and don't know much about these things.

"Project Utopia has also taken steps to ensure that the hole won't open again. First, we'll be performing "environmental patrols" to check for other damage to the ozone layer. Second, we've introduced into the atmosphere a new strain



of bacteria that Utopia's scientists genetically engineered. Although harmless to all living things, these bugs are hell on chlorofluorocarbons — they *eat* them and release salt, fluoride and carbon dioxide as waste products. So no CFCs will survive long enough to damage the ozone layer *and* your teeth will be stronger."

Cleaning the Oceans

Having solved our major air problem, Project Utopia turned to the water problem. It used another genetically engineered bacteria, one developed in part by an unaffiliated nova named Levia Mindel. This bacteria, dubbed a "bioremedial" organism, was designed to "eat" and break down pollutants in the world's oceans, rivers and lakes. Combined with a massive physical cleanup effort by Team Tomorrow and other Utopia employees, the Mindel bacteria was supposed to return the world's water to pre-Industrial Revo-

lution levels of cleanliness by the year 2006. As we know now, of course, that estimate was pessimistic; the cleanup was accomplished by 2005.

Why the early completion of the project? It was thanks in part to another organism designed by Project Utopia scientists, the Zushima macrobe, which ate both water and air pollutants. Backed by the cleanup efforts of the Project Utopia novas assigned to Operation Clean Sweep, the Mindel and Zushima organisms cleaned the air and water like a picky homemaker scrubbing a sink. By 2005, every human on Earth was breathing fresher air and drinking cleaner water than anyone had for 150 years. Remedial levels of these organisms remain in our environment today, cleaning up the pollutants humans keep spewing out and metabolizing them into simple, non-toxic substances such as glucose, water, and harmless salts.

From *Time Magazine*

From "Relocating Utopia," *Time Magazine*, October 2001

Citing increasing tension with the United States government, Project Utopia announced today that it was moving its headquarters to a new facility in Venice. The new Utopia Complex, currently under construction, will house Utopia's laboratories, conference centers and other resources, with room for planned future growth.

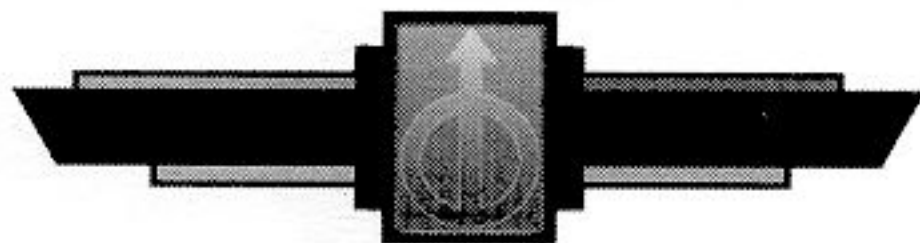
"We hate to leave New York," said Utopia's Director, Justin J. Laragione. "However, the U.S. government has become less and less cooperative over the past year or so and we simply can't afford the time it takes to deal with the situation anymore. We're trying to help the entire world and the results so far show that we're doing a good job. It's a shame that my home country isn't willing to be a part of this grand design."

United States officials had no comment. United States citizens, on the other hand, had plenty to say. "I think it's awful that our government can't pull its head out of the sand and work with these people," said Linda Furman, a resident of New York City. "Project Utopia was a real asset to this city; it's too bad the government made them leave."

From *Dividing Canaan: The Israeli-Palestinian Accord*, by Robert Weisberg

In 2000, the Project Utopia Diplomacy Corps took on what would become its greatest challenge: the thorny dispute between the nation of Israel and the Palestinians (who were represented by the Palestinian Liberation Organization). According to documents released after the accord was signed, the Diplomacy Corps had been talking with leaders of both nations to try to bring them together for negotiations. While the PLO seemed willing, Israel remained intransigent until early 2001, when it suddenly and inexplicably changed its mind.

Under the leadership of Chief Negotiator Victorine Dutier, the peace conference began in London in January, 2001. Four months of discussion, wrangling and compromise followed, but in the end it was worth it. On May 12, 2001, Israel and the PLO signed the historic London Peace Accord, establishing the new nation of Palestine in the region between Israel and Egypt. The PLO agreed to this, in part, because the Aeon Society agreed to provide extensive funding to build schools, water production and treatment plants, roads and other infrastructure improvements and Project Utopia agreed to have Team Tomorrow assist with those and other development projects. Additionally, Project Utopia agreed to establish a monitoring station along the border between the two countries, to ensure that no hostilities would arise between them.



CHAPTER 1: THE GENESIS

From *Covert Action News*

From "Utopia's Real Agenda," *Covert Action News*, April 2001

Sweetness and light may be its professed goals, but Project Utopia's got more on its mind than that. When it began arranging the negotiations for and then actually negotiating, a peace settlement between the Palestinians and Israel, settling the longstanding Middle East conflict was only its *secondary* goal.

Intelligence analysts have speculated for years that Israel has a highly secret military corps of as many as half a dozen novas working for it. This secret's not completely blown yet and the Israelis want to keep it that way. As long as no one has proof, they can maintain plausible deniability.

That's where Project Utopia comes in. It's got more novas on its payroll than any single nation and it wants to maintain that quasi-monopoly as long as it can. That means anyone who tries to develop military cadres of novas becomes a target — for intelligence gathering, if nothing else. Mark my words: If Utopia succeeds in brokering a peace, part of the deal will be Utopia control of the border or something like that. And that just becomes a way for the Utopians to spy on Israel and learn more about its nova assets.

General News Release

Utopia's Popularity Reaches New Heights

VENICE, ITALY, May 15, 2001 (AP) — In the wake of the London Peace Accord, the historic agreement bringing peace to the strife-torn Middle East, Project Utopia is enjoying a wave of increased popularity — something rarely seen for any organization that has a 90%-plus approval rating to begin with.

As the negotiator of the accord, Project Utopia has established even greater credibility in the eyes of the public. "I think that, up until now, we were mainly known for our activities in counterterrorism, crime control and environmental affairs," said Director Justin J. Laragione of the project. "Now I'm pleased that we've been able to contribute to the sphere of diplomacy as well. As always, Project Utopia is here to serve mankind and help create a brighter tomorrow for everyone."

From *Covert Action News*

From "Utopia's Real Agenda Revisited," *Covert Action News*, December 2002

So now, on top of their "monitoring station" on the Israeli-Palestinian border, the Utopians have the right to "oversee," and establish facilities in, Kashmir — a region that just happens to border on China and India, the countries with the two largest armies in the world and two of the largest "official" cadres of military novas to boot. And of course it's prime territory for observing the southern parts of what used to be Russia. Coincidence? Not on your life, friends; dimes will get you dollars that Project Utopia administered the spark that touched off the Kashmir tinderbox. After all, China's never really had a stake in that fight before; it's always been just India and Pakistan. *Something* — something that's being kept under wraps — drew them into it this time. The smart money's on Utopia manipulation.



The Glory Years: 2003-2005

From *New Millennia, New Environment: Project Utopia and Ecotransformation*, by Gerald Lang, Ph.D

Although it seems unlikely that anyone, even the novas of Project Utopia, could do better than cleaning up the oceans and the air, they seemed determined to try. On May 6, 2003, Project Utopia announced a joint project with the United Nations and the government of Ethiopia to “terraform” the Ethiopian highlands. According to the press release issued at the time, the intention of “Operation Eden” was “to transform the desert regions of northern Ethiopia into a lush temperate region capable of supporting a variety of non-desert lifeforms, as well as agriculture.”

Despite Project Utopia’s past triumphs, many members of the world community scoffed at this proclamation. To turn the sere regions of northern Ethiopia into simple arable land,

much less a “lush temperate region,” would require environmental engineering on a scale never before attempted. But Project Utopia ignored the skeptics and set to work.

A discussion of the full extent and nature of the work needed to perform Operation Eden is beyond the scope of this book, since it involves very precise ecological and engineering calculations. In brief, what Project Utopia’s novas and scientists did was employ nova powers, together with the latest technological developments from Utopia’s laboratories, to transform the local environment. Novas with powers relating to stone or water, such as Antaeus and Splash, slowly created artificial artesian wells, springs and a system of underground streams that would bring a steady, reliable supply of water to the region. Antaeus also did yeoman’s work, altering the local geography to erect hills and small mountains as windbreaks in some areas, to tear down hills in others and to create a thick layer of topsoil where appropriate.

Meanwhile, other novas began experimenting to determine what forms of life the region could sustain. In some cases they found it necessary to alter the species subtly, so that they would better fit the region’s artificial ecology, but it’s nothing anyone other than a scientist would ever notice.



The power being exercised in Operation Eden was awesome — the most awesome, perhaps, since the creation of the garden, which inspired the project's name and even then the task took three years to complete.

From *Terror in São Paulo: The Explosion and the Aftermath*, by Nathan Bradford.

João do Gradaus worked in the Five Palms Restaurant in São Paulo as a maitre d', a job he'd held for over fifteen years. He reported to work every evening at 5:00 p.m. and stayed until midnight, when the restaurant closed. Then he returned home to his wife and children. He lived his life according to a simple routine, one that, according to all reports, he enjoyed fully.

On September 25, 2003, his routine was interrupted. And he never made it home again.

At approximately 10:23 p.m. local time, a crude fusion device was detonated in downtown São Paulo. The explosion originated in a parking deck next to a large office complex near the heart of downtown. In the space of microseconds it expanded outward to obliterate the surrounding blocks. By the time it reached five blocks' distance, João do Gradaus had just begun to hear the rumble and look up from his position near the door at the Five Palms to see what was causing it. Then he, the Five Palms and everyone inside it were wiped off the face of the earth by a hand of nuclear fire.

The fusion bomb, though crude, was remarkably effective. An area roughly 30 city blocks in radius was completely destroyed, as if crushed by some gigantic foot. According to some reports, not a single fully intact human body was found within that area. Beyond that area, many buildings suffered damage, often extensive and hundreds of people were killed or hurt. All in all, the death toll from the explosion approached one million and the damages exceeded 20 billion dollars — making the bombing by far the costliest terrorist attack in history. Had the attack occurred during the day, the loss of life and destruction would have been many times worse.

The toll would also have been significantly higher if not for the timely intervention of Team Tomorrow Americas, which responded immediately, landing within fifteen minutes of the explosion. Since by then it had become apparent that the main blast radius contained no survivors, their first priorities were to contain the fallout and keep anyone else from dying in the damaged zone.

The first job was easy. Andrea Lassiter, a non-T2M nova working for Utopia flew over the city, absorbing all of the stray radiation into her body. Within a few hours she literally glowed with all of the energy it contained. When she had done all she could, Pax flew her into outer space, where she was able to release the radiation where it would harm no one.

Meanwhile, the other Tomorrowites shored up damaged buildings, healed the injured and distributed food, blankets and other supplies.

General News Release

Still No Suspects in São Paulo Bombing

SAO PAULO, BRAZIL, February 14, 2004 (AP) — Brazilian officials together with members of Team Tomorrow Americas announced today that, after months of detailed investigation, they still had no clues as to the perpetrators of the Sao Paulo bombing.

"We're mystified," said one Brazilian law-enforcement officer who asked not to be identified. "Even with the resources of Project Utopia and the Aeon Society to support us, we've hit a dead end with every clue we investigated. Even forensic analysis with the assistance of Utopia novas hasn't helped."

While the bombing is still being described as a "terrorist incident," sources requesting anonymity have said that description is becoming increasingly suspect. "If it was a terrorist attack, why hasn't anyone claimed responsibility? Where are the ransom demands?" said one source.

When asked for comment, Team Tomorrow Americas stated through a spokesman that the Team was still working on the case, that progress was being made and that concrete details would be reported as soon as possible.

Rumors persist in Brazilian governmental circles that novas caused the explosion. "Obviously we have no proof of anything," said one police official. "But when even the novas of Team Tomorrow can't track down the perpetrators of such a terrible deed, one has to wonder if it's anyone other than a nova could frustrate other novas so completely."



CHAPTER 1: THE GENESIS

Radio Transcript

Transcript of the syndicated *Jordan McDevitt Show*, a talk-radio program, aired February 20, 2003.

Brent from Dallas: ...it was bad enough that they couldn't prevent it in the first place, but to not even be able to come up with *potential* suspects? I mean, come on, these are novas we're talking about — why can't they find anything? What are they trying to cover up? Or, who are they working with?



General News Release

Brazilians Warm to Novas

São Paulo Efforts Change Opinions on Novas

"God bless Team Tomorrow," says Inez, a Brazilian citizen who used to live on the street with her two children. "My son and I were nearly killed when a wall collapsed on us after the bomb exploded. But Slider rescued us and made sure our injuries were taken care of. Now we live in a housing development built by Project Utopia."

All around Brazil, similar sentiments are echoed by peasant, businessman and bureaucrat alike. A nation once known for its suspicion and even mistreatment, of novas has undergone a sea change.

"After seeing all the good they can do, I must admit I've completely reevaluated my opinion of them," said a high-ranking officer in the Brazilian military. "I think our days of scorning and abusing them are at an end. Novas are certainly welcome to join any of my units — and, frankly, I wouldn't have said that a year ago. At least some good has come from that terrible explosion."

From the *New York Times* editorial page, June 16, 2004

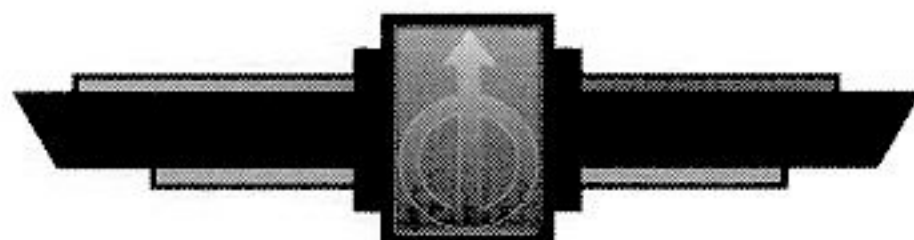
Overreaching Pride

Yesterday, Secretary-General Halvor Froydis announced that the United Nations was granting Project Utopia's Science and Technology Department blanket authority to, as he put it, "monitor, approve and regulate new technologies." His stated rationale for this action was that the "nova boom" has been responsible for the vast majority of technological developments over the past six years. Project

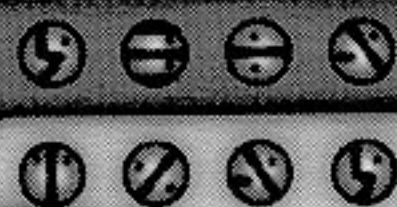
Utopia, as the entity most familiar with novas and their affect on technology and society, is thus best equipped to monitor nova-derived scientific advances.

This action on the part of the Secretary-general is, at best, ill-considered; at worst it could act as a significant check on the booming world economy. The issues relating to and ramifications of, this action seem to have been completely lost on UN officials.

First, by what authority does the UN purport to establish blanket regulations over *anything* — and, even worse, to hand over control of that regulatory process to a private agency run by a charitable foundation? Nothing in the UN Charter gives the Secretary-general the power



CHAPTER 1: THE GENESIS



OpSite Posting

From NovaWatch!, <http://ops.novawatch!12.com.vtml> "The OpSite of Skeptical Inquiry into All Things Nova", posted October 17, 2004

You asked for it and we've got it! For some weeks now we've been hearing rumors about a new "Rashoud lab" that PU opened in Bahrain. Now NovaWatch! has the full story for you, complete with pictures!

Why Bahrain, you ask? That's not exactly Nova Central, if you know what I mean; it's pretty much a barren desert. The answer: it's not really a Rashoud lab at all.

Rashoud facilities, as you know, are for testing new novas, helping them learn about their powers (and of course, letting PU learn about their powers, too) and recruiting new novas into PU. The facility in Bahrain is a different sort o' beastie altogether. According to some confidential UN documents obtained by this opsite, it's intended to test, not new novas, but *older* novas who are experiencing "high levels of quantum buildup" — whatever that is. It doesn't sound very healthy.

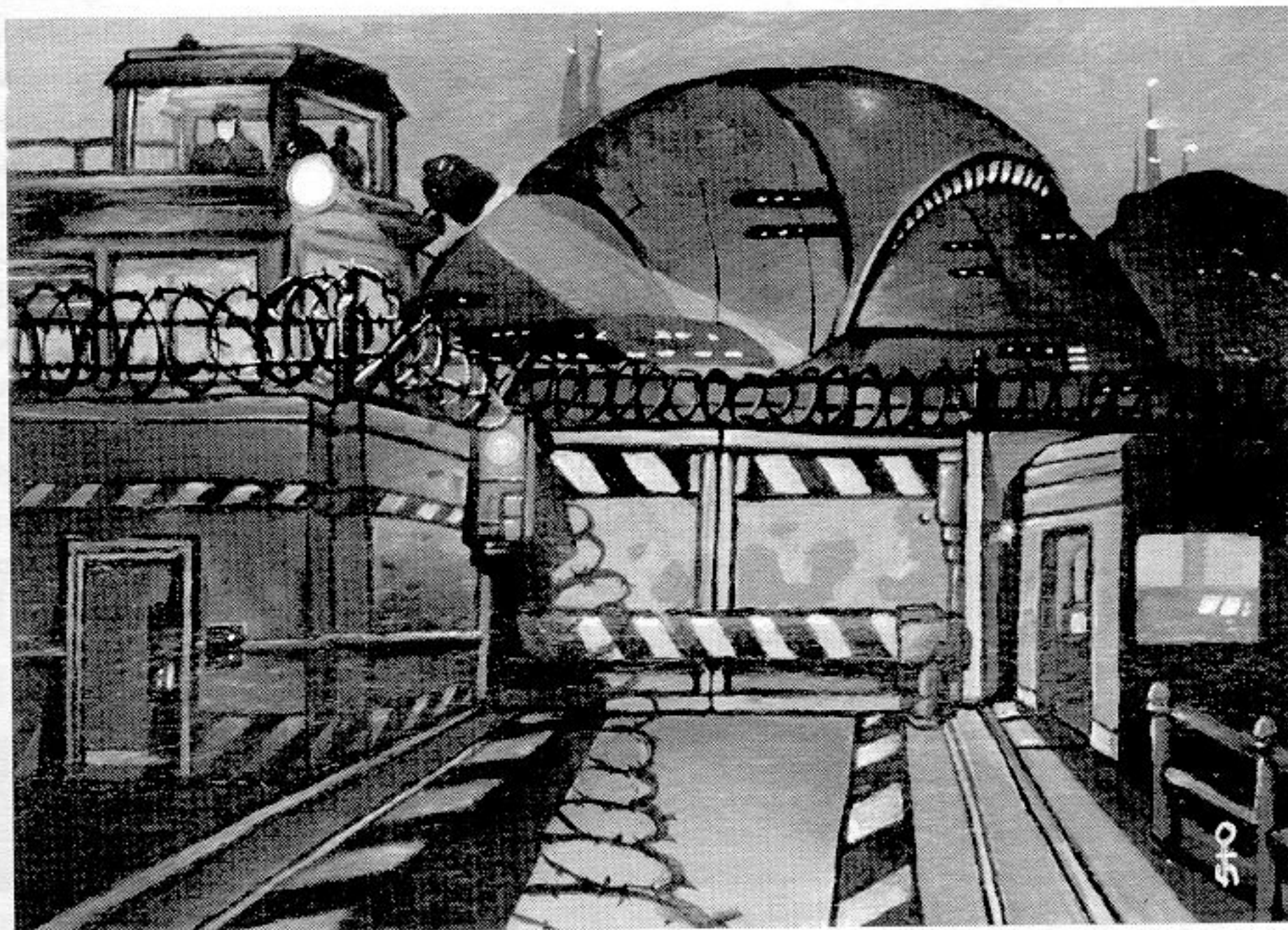
Information smuggled out to this site by informants we dare not name paint an even grimmer picture. Based on what I've read, it sounds to me like any novas, which the UN or PU get upset about, for whatever reason, might just wind up here for "testing." The sort of testing performed in windowless labs deep underground where no one can hear the screams.

Think I'm exaggerating? Check it out for yourself:

[Read the text](#)

[Look at the pictures](#)

Stay watchful,
The
NovaWatcher



to control technological development. The entire act violates not only UN regulations, but well-established international law.

Second, even assuming the UN has the power to do this, the means by which it has undertaken to exercise that power is highly suspect. Project Utopia, despite its close association with the United Nations and the Aeon Society,

is still a private organization — in fact, it's the wealthiest such organization in the world. It owns or controls many businesses, including several that exploit its research into nova powers to develop new technologies. Allowing the project to oversee all similar technological developments is like giving the fox the keys to the henhouse. By getting an early eye at what its competition intends to do, it can short-circuit that competition.



From the book *Dreaming of Erewhon: A History of Project Utopia*, by Alexander Seivers

Although their failure to close out the São Paulo incident with arrests of those responsible chafed at the members of Team Tomorrow, they soon had other challenges to confront them. Chief among these was the rise to power of Yaroslav Radocani of the Balkan nation of Macedonia.

Radocani began his career as a Communist party hack in the regime of Tito. After Tito's fall and Yugoslavia's ultimately futile effort to carry on without him, Radocani changed his stripes and began agitating for the creation of a powerful, separate, state of Macedonia. Under Radocani's scheme, Serbs, Albanians, Turks and other "polluting peoples" would be expelled from Macedonia — violently if necessary — to maintain "the ethnic purity of the Macedonian people." For many years, Radocani slowly built support for his message of hate among the common people and the military. Then, in late 2003, he was swept to power in a military coup, which he apparently orchestrated. Forces loyal to him were equipped with military gear far in advance of any weapons fielded by any other military force in the world.

Once in power, Radocani embarked on his plan of "ethnic purity" with a vengeance. Ethnic Serbs, Albanians, Turks and other non-Macedonians were rounded up and forced to leave the country without even taking their possessions with them. Those who protested, or who attracted the attention of Radocani's soldiers, were tortured, raped and killed.

Radocani's neighbors, of course, did not react well to what they termed "ethnic aggression" against them and their

people. Serbian and Albanian forces mobilized in an effort to stop Radocani, plunging the region into yet another low-intensity war. Despite being outnumbered, Radocani's forces were able to use their superior military technology to hold their own and even achieve some notable victories.

Team Tomorrow considered getting involved in this conflict from its earliest days, but held off until April 19, 2005, when it received confirmation that Radocani's weapons had been manufactured by several Japanese corporations acting in defiance of UN regulations granting oversight of such advanced technology to Project Utopia. At no time had Utopia been consulted about, or even advised of, the manufacture of these weapons. That made Radocani's aggression a matter with which they must concern themselves. In the space of a single day, selected members of Team Tomorrow Europe and Americas descended on Macedonia, smashed Radocani's army (and all of its advanced military technology) and captured Radocani himself. The erstwhile dictator was turned over to the World Court for trial on charges of crimes against humanity and UN forces moved into Macedonia to hold it as a protectorate until full democratic elections could be held to install a new government.

As with previous quasi-military actions on the part of Team Tomorrow, this one was accompanied by extensive press coverage. All major networks interrupted their scheduled programming repeatedly to bring viewers up-to-the-minute reports on the Team's actions. The half-dozen novas who actually participated in the "peacekeeping mission" were lauded worldwide for their decisive action to prevent further loss of innocent life. Several renegotiated endorsement contracts to obtain terms more favorable to themselves.

From *Newsweek*

From "Utopia Technological Oversight Increased," *Newsweek*, May 1, 2005

In the wake of recent activities in Macedonia and the revelation that Japanese industrialists supplied dictator Yaroslav Radocani with high-tech military weapons in contravention of United Nations regulations, the Security Council today granted further regulatory powers to Project Utopia, a private research and philanthropic organization under the auspices of the Aeon Society. Citing the need to monitor "potentially dangerous technological advancements," the council invested Project Utopia with broad powers to conduct searches and seize unreported technological items and data.

The International Court of Justice at the Hague recently issued a decision upholding the Security Council's authority to delegate to Project Utopia technology regulation duties and powers. It is expected that any challenges brought to these new regulations will be similarly upheld.



The Fighting Years: 2006-2007

From *New Millennia, New Environment: Project Utopia and Ecotransformation*, by Gerald Lang, Ph.D.

Operation Eden concluded successfully on May 22, 2006, when the Ethiopian government announced the completion of the project. Reporters invited to tour the terraformed area could scarcely believe their eyes. Where once lay a sere desert plain, marked only by rocks and dust storms, there now arose a lush grassland, with deep green grass, small patches of forest, open running water and an active wildlife population. In all quarters the work was hailed as a miracle and its chief architect, the nova ecologist Dr. Spencer "Antaeus" Balmer, regarded as a hero who would soon make all the Earth's dry places green.

Much like its northern desert, the nation of Ethiopia was reborn under the tutelage of Project Utopia. Economic and agricultural advisors visited Addis Ababa to teach the Ethiopians how to make the best use of their newfound resource. They learned their lessons well; the first year's harvest in the new farmlands surpassed even the most optimistic expectations. A nation once unable to feed its own people soon became known as the "breadbasket of Africa" and the envy of its neighbors.

From the book *Dreaming of Erewhon: A History of Project Utopia*, by Alexander Seivers

Following the successful completion of Operation Eden, Project Utopia received a gift from the grateful Ethiopian government: a new headquarters in Addis Ababa, a once-squalid city now known as the "gem of East Africa." In deciding to accept this headquarters, Project Utopia also determined that the time had come to once again split up its highly successful Teams Tomorrow, the better to serve the world. After much consideration, Project Utopia also decided to make the exquisite new headquarters the Teams' main base. Team Tomorrow Americas and Team Tomorrow Europe would remain where they were and two new branches would open: Team Tomorrow Central, based in Addis Ababa; and Team Tomorrow Asia/Pacific, with headquarters on Talud Island.

The Second Kashmir Nova War

Shortly after settling into their new headquarters, members of the Teams Tomorrow were once again called into battle in the Kashmir region. According to reports, on July 30, a Pakistani national living in the Kashmir Demilitarized Zone was attacked, raped and beaten to death by a group of Indian soldiers. The response was swift, but not entirely predictable. Rather than sending soldiers into the area, or risking any of their own novas, each of the governments did what Pakistan did in the last conflict: hired cadres of "elite" novas to fight their battle for them. Each group of elites had the same orders: defeat the other two groups and claim the Kashmir region for its employer.

The fighting lasted no longer this time than the last, but its effects were much worse. Each elite squadron hoped to win the battle through swift, decisive overkill tactics. The outcome was nightmarish; in the space of a few hours, a once beautiful mountain region became a blasted, barren wasteland. Entire forests were smashed into splinters, other peaks joined Mt. Rakaposhi in broken ruin and dozens of inhabitants were killed in their homes or while fleeing to safer ground.

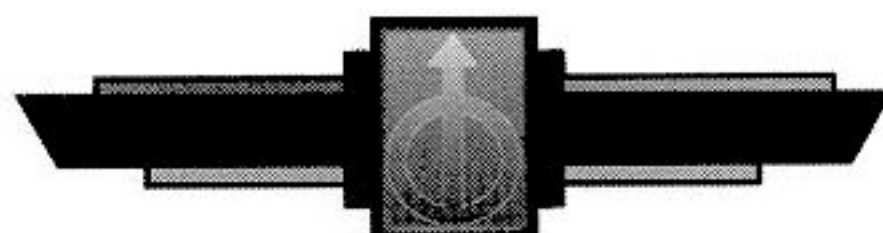
Once again, novas from Project Utopia, acting under the United Nations aegis, brought the fighting to a halt. In a series of short, sharp confrontations, which left three members of the Teams Tomorrows badly wounded, the mercenary groups were brought under control. Their leaders and other members deemed most responsible for the ecological devastation in the area were arrested and turned over to the World Court.

The Trans-Tanzanian Conflict

Less than a year later, another violent confrontation between elite nova mercenaries and the members of the Teams Tomorrow occurred, this time in central Africa. General Akia Kabonesa, president-for-life of the nation of Uganda, decided that his country's boundaries were too small and that his people (not to mention himself) deserved greater riches. Depleting the Ugandan treasury to do so, he hired nearly a dozen elite novas and turned them loose on the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania.

He expected a swift victory and nearly obtained it. None of those nations had novas in their armies, nor could they hire them quickly enough to oppose Kabonesa's attack. With the elites ravaging their target nations and stealing everything of value, it was all the authorities could do to protect their own people, much less fight back.

Fortunately, Team Tomorrow once again weighed in on the side of the victims of power-madness. Spear-



CHAPTER 1: THE GENESIS

headed by Team Tomorrow Central, the attack employed Utopia's proven tactic of defeating elite nova groups with precision and overwhelming opposition and effectively bringing them to justice before the World Court. It confronted the largest group of elites, the squad sent to conquer Congo, near the city of Port Kindu. In a bloody 30-minute battle, that wrecked most of the surrounding countryside, the Tomorrowites brought the elites, including the long-wanted killer Gustav "Headhunter" Czermer, to heel. According to some reports, more nova blood was spilled in that battle than any nova battle before or since, although no novas died.

After that group was defeated, a majority of the remaining elites reneged on their contracts and fled the continent.

Team Tomorrow members pursued and captured some; others managed to escape. President-for-Life Kabonesa was arrested in his own bedchamber and taken to the Hague for trial.

From "Utopia Obtains Advisory Seat on Security Council," *Time Magazine*, August 2007

In a surprise move that shocked the world, the United Nations Security Council — a body composed of the United States, United Kingdom, France, the Russian Confederation and China, plus limited-term representatives from 15 other countries — has granted a permanent "advisory" seat on the council to Project Utopia.

From Entertainment Weekly

From an article in *Entertainment Weekly*:

N! Network Enjoys Highest Ratings Ever

Kashmir Incident Pushes "Nova Channel" Over The Top

No media outlet in the world has so successfully exploited the nova phenomenon than the N! network, which devotes itself exclusively to covering nova-related news incidents. With a fare consisting partly of news coverage, partly of melodramatic documentaries and partly of thinly disguised marketing hype, N! has made billions from the novas without paying Project Utopia or anyone else a dime in licensing fees.

N!'s coverage of the recent deplorable events in Kashmir is a perfect example of its method of business. Multiple N! reporter teams were present on the scene almost from the minute the situation developed — perhaps even earlier (if some rumors are to be believed), as if they knew trouble were brewing. N! teams covered every major battle, interviewed Utopian and elite novas and provided running commentary for each conflict.

Thanks to the millions of viewers who tuned in to follow N!'s coverage of events — coverage widely perceived as more accurate than that of CNN or any "standard" network — N!'s ratings and revenues soared, capping years of steadily increasing profits. During some time periods, N!'s coverage received higher ratings — sometimes *significantly* higher ratings — than those of the standard networks.

"We give the people what they want," said N! spokesman Michael Conners. "Novas are a fascinating subject for many people and rightly so. Who among us hasn't wanted to fly, or to juggle cars like they were rubber balls? Our coverage of this popular topic is thorough, responsible and professional and that's why our ratings continue to increase."

While many within the industry would agree with "thorough" and "professional," "responsible" is another matter. N! has repeatedly come under fire for its willingness to treat all novas equally. "It's not our place to make ethical judgments," responds Geoffrey Gold, the network's Vice President of Programming. "The public wants to hear about novas, so that's what we give them. Who are we to say that one nova is "good," and deserves coverage and another is "bad" and shouldn't be talked about at all? That's a sneaking form of censorship and we refuse to do that to our viewers. Divis Mal's philosophy may not rub us the right way, but knee-jerk condemnation of the man runs contrary to our ethics, both as journalists and as members of the entertainment community. N! is not here to manipulate anyone's opinion; we're here to provide information."

N



CHAPTER 1: THE GENESIS



Project Utopia is a private organization, ultimately funded and controlled by the philanthropic Aeon Society, which uses novas (including its well-known Team Tomorrow) to perform works "for the betterment of all mankind." Since its founding in 1978, Project Utopia — which has worked closely with the UN at all times — has been responsible for cleaning the world's air and waters, terraforming the Ethiopian highlands, assisting various nations with problems stemming from the 1999 recession, peacekeeping efforts in Kashmir and elsewhere and a wide variety of other missions.

As part of the agreement that gave it the advisory seat, Project Utopia agreed to pay off the debts of the five permanent UN Security Council member nations — a sum totaling approximately \$2.6 billion. According to Utopia officials, this debt retirement is being underwritten in part by the Aeon Society.

In the eyes of many, Project Utopia's close-working relationship with the UN and its unprecedented good works justify its new position on the security council. "We're talking about an organization that cleaned up the entire planet, reversed our ecological self-destruction and turned the Ethiopian desert into farmland," said one UN official who spoke on condition of anonymity. "Along the way, they've maintained positive relations between novas and baseline humans, delivered relief aid to disaster victims and per-

formed countless other selfless services without requesting a penny of compensation. I think they've proven their good intentions and worthiness to participate on the council many times over."

Others, however, are less sanguine. "This is a business proposition, pure and simple," said Robert Ridgely, who recently resigned as United States Ambassador to the United Nations. "They bought their way onto the council. Ted Turner gave the UN a billion dollars 10 years ago, but he didn't get a seat on the Security Council. Apparently the full price is *two point six billion*."

"The UN is a body of *nations*, not organizations and it and all its agencies should remain that way," agreed political commentator Arthur Ruiz. "Granting any private organization, even one as important and influential as Project Utopia, a seat on the most important agency — the UN Security Council — is tantamount to selling seats in the United States Senate to the highest bidder."

In response, Justin J. Laragione, Director of Project Utopia, stated: "The debt payoff is a public service like any other; it simply allows the council nations to devote more of their own funds directly to their peoples' needs. The advisory seat had nothing to do with that service; the council itself proposed to offer us that seat months ago."

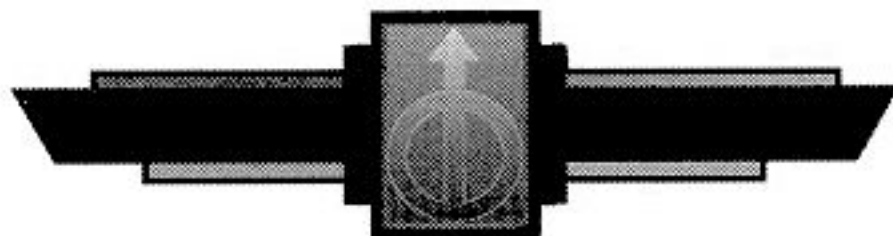
General News Release

Utopian Nova Slain in Tragic Accident

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA, April 13, 2007 (AP) — Project Utopia nova Rafia Bhakra, a Utopia specialist on retainer to Team Tomorrow Central, was killed yesterday while assisting with terraforming maintenance in the Ethiopian highlands.

According to a statement released by Project Utopia, Bhakra was working by himself, using gravitic pulses on rocks in the nearby mountainous desert region to break them down for use in topsoil maintenance. In doing so he inadvertently caused a rockslide, which crushed him to death moments later.

"All of us in Team Tomorrow are deeply saddened by this tragic, senseless loss," said Teams leader Caestus Pax. "Rafia was a valued colleague and friend and we shall miss him."



The Year of Tragedy: 2008

From "World Mourns Death of Beloved Heroine," *World Today*, May 14, 2008

Jennifer "Slider" Landers, one of the most popular members of Team Tomorrow and a spokeswoman for cordial human-nova relations since her eruption in 2000, was declared dead on arrival at 1:02 a.m. on May 14 at UN Franklin Moran field hospital. News of the idolized Landers's death has plunged thousands into mourning, shock and anguish. She was the fourth member of Team Tomorrow to die since the team's inception in 1999.

"She was such a wonderful person," sobbed Lucy Atwater, President of the Slider World Fan Club, which maintains a popular OpSite devoted to the nova's life and career. "All she ever wanted was to help people. I can't believe anyone would do something like this."

According to Calcutta law-enforcement officials, Landers's body was found shortly after midnight on May 14 in her Calcutta hotel room based on an anonymous tip phoned in to a local police station. She was rushed to the hospital by ambulance, but she was DOA from the catastrophic levels of blunt trauma she suffered. Landers had been hit from behind hard enough to shatter her vertebrae, stave in her ribcage and pulp her heart and lungs. No evidence of sexual assault was present.

Natesh Balindari, an investigator with the Calcutta Police, stated, "Our present investigation is based on the assumption that Ms. Landers's killer was another nova. A normal human would have had enormous difficulty overpowering a nova of her ability and experience." No witnesses to the attack have stepped forward thus far, leading to some speculation that she may have been killed elsewhere and the body transported to Calcutta. However, police state that the evidence at the scene of the crime indicates that she was, in fact, killed where her body was found.

Landers was in India as a temporary security contractor for Novelty Consulting, a corporation that, for undisclosed reasons, feared Teragen espionage against its operations. Balindari has indicated that novas belonging to or associated with the Teragen movement may, in fact, be responsible for her death.

Ricardo Montoya-Bernal, Landers's team leader on Team Tomorrow Americas, issued a formal statement, saying, "Those of us who knew and loved Jennifer Landers cannot adequately express our sadness and outrage at this terrible crime. Our most profound sympathy goes out to Jennifer's family and we promise to investigate her murder to the full extent of our ability."

Landers' funeral is planned for tomorrow in Calcutta, a city she knew well and had come to consider a second home. Her family requests that fans consider their feelings in their time of mourning and allow the funeral to remain a private matter.



Lucy Atwater – Photo Credits: Mitch Byrd

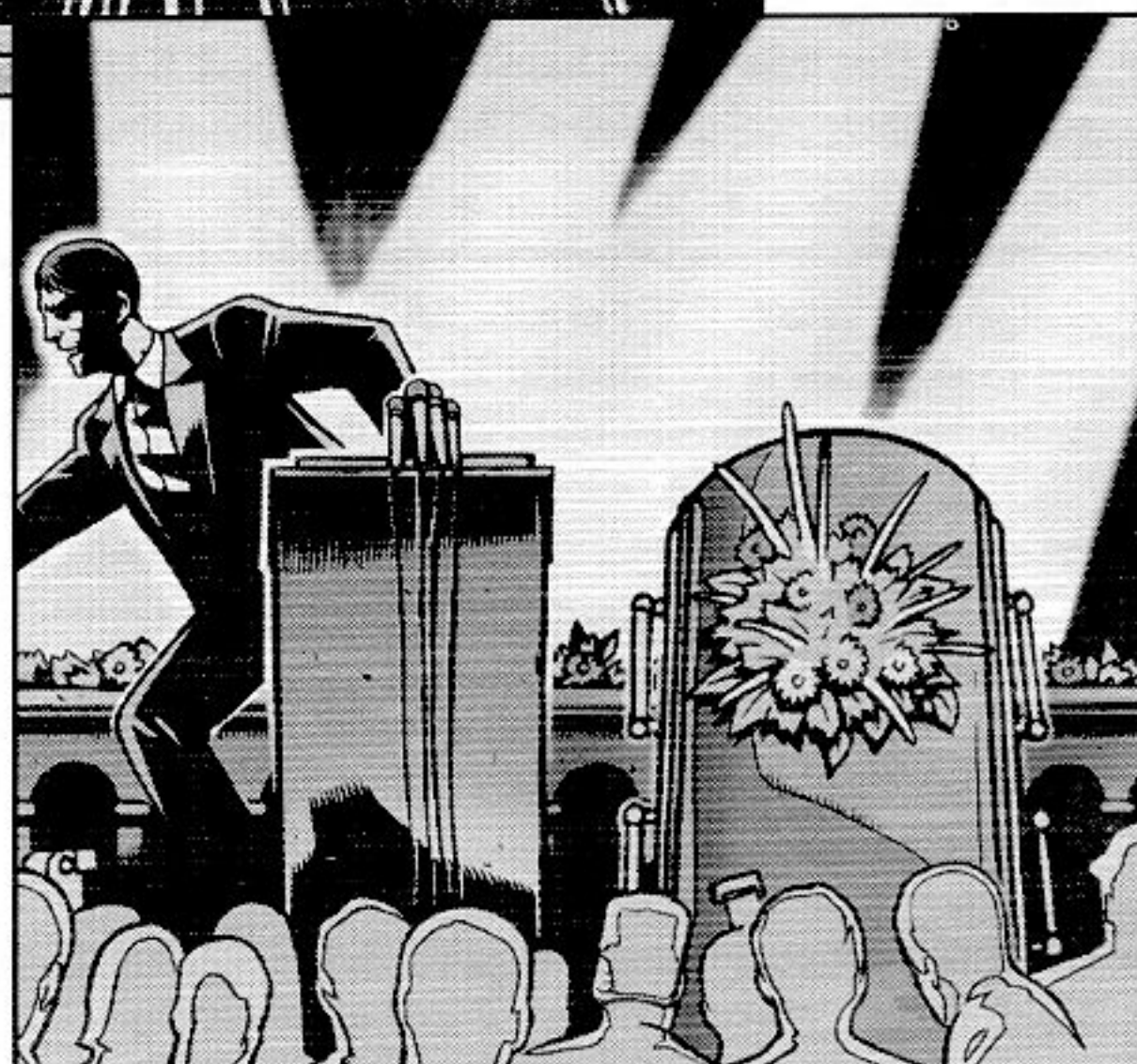
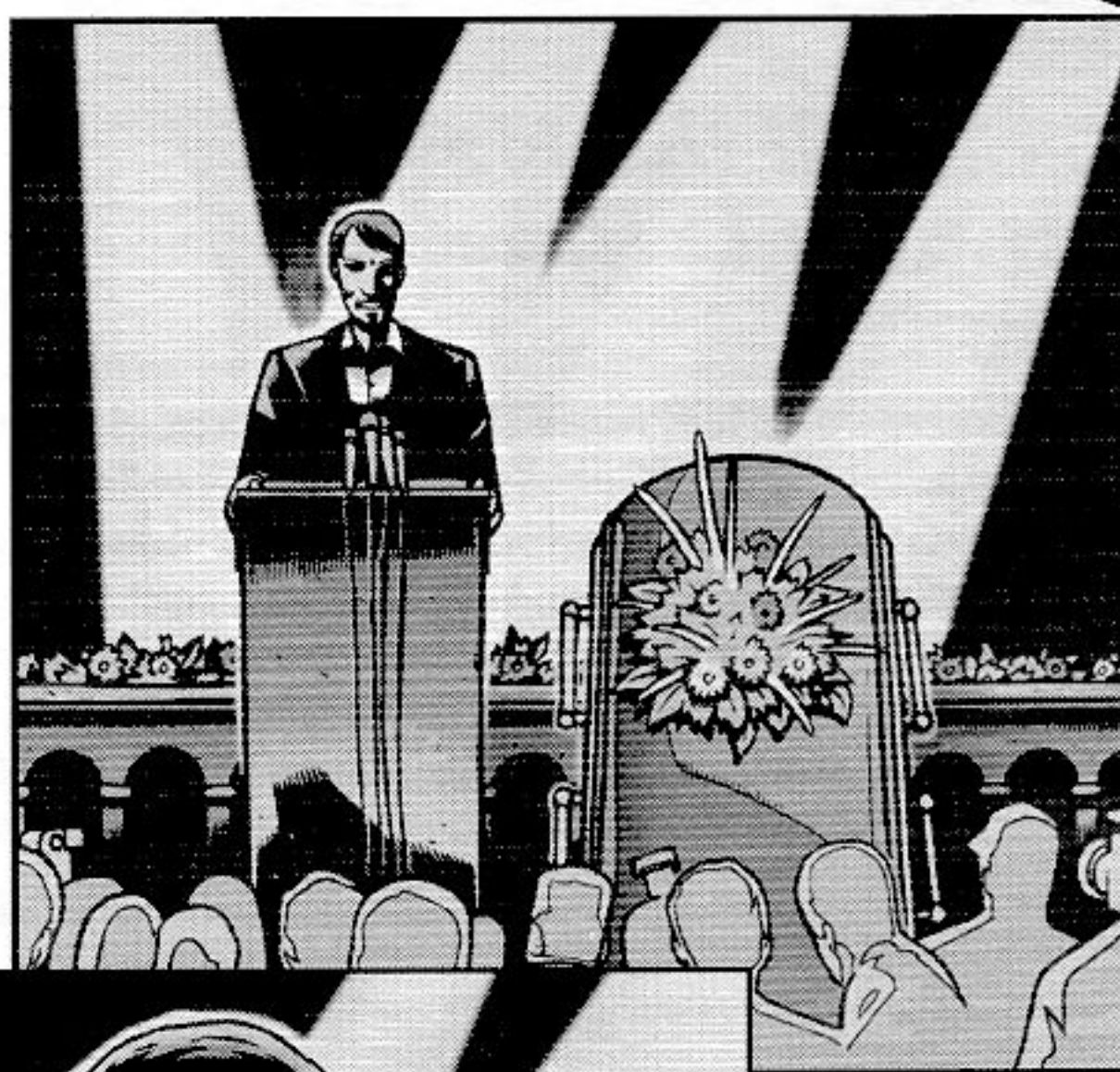
From "Landers Funeral Holds More Surprises," *U.S. News & World Report*, May 20, 2008

While in the middle of delivering the eulogy at Jennifer "Slider" Landers's funeral, controversial ex-Team Tomorrow member André Corbin inexplicably fled the podium and has not been seen since.

Witnesses say that, prior to giving the eulogy and later while describing Landers's heroism and devotion to the causes of Project Utopia, Corbin seemed distracted. Suddenly he started, as if surprised by something and then bolted from the podium and ran away. He has not been seen since.

"Even coming from Mr. Corbin, this is shocking," said Team Tomorrow leader Caestus Pax. "She was his friend; I can't believe that even he would behave this way at her funeral. It's absolutely disgraceful and he should come forward and explain himself immediately."

Corbin, a former soccer player whose powers erupted in 2004, was asked to join Team Tomorrow shortly thereafter. Following a checkered career that involved an affair with Princess Fazour of Saudi Arabia and the mysterious death of her husband at the time and a gala "party" that wrecked over a third of New York's Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, Corbin was dismissed from the team. Since then he has participated in the making of the adult film *Hardballs*. Despite his questionable activities, he and Landers were close friends and his choice as her eulogist was apparently made by Landers herself in documents filed with her employer, Project Utopia.



From *N! the News*, broadcast May 16, 2008

Spokespersons for Project Utopia today revealed the shocking news that André Corbin, a former member of Team Tomorrow, is believed responsible for the murder of Jennifer "Slider" Landers in Calcutta, India three days ago.

"DNA evidence on Landers's body confirms that André Corbin was her killer," said Caestus Pax, leader of Team To-

morrow. "Mr. Corbin must have used his emotion-manipulation powers to bring Landers close to him. Then, while she was vulnerable, he used his strength and speed beat her to death before she could teleport to safety.

"Further evidence indicates that Corbin was, in fact, a member of the Teragen organization. We suspect that her murder was part of some broader scheme on the Teragen's part and have stepped up our security measures and vigilance of suspected Teragen members. We shall not rest until Corbin is captured and made to answer for this heinous crime."

Radio Transcript

Transcript of the syndicated *Jordan McDevitt Show*, a talk-radio program, aired May 14, 2008.

Jordan McDevitt: Okay, listeners, we're taking your calls at 1-888-TALK-OUT. Our topic today is the Landers murder. Let's go to the phones. Jackie from Capitola, you're on the air.

Jackie from Capitola: Thank you, Jor. Isn't this a tragedy?

JM: Yes, it is. I think everyone *agrees* on that. Do you have any other opinion about it?

Jackie from Capitola: Well, what I want to know is, what's this "Novelty Consulting" company that Slider was working for over in Calcutta?

JM: I believe it's some sort of expensive technology and science consultation-firm and pretty highbrow at that.

Jackie from Capitola: Okay, but why did they hire Slider? The news said they were afraid of those awful Teragen terrorists, but not why.

JM: That information hasn't been released. If I had to guess, I'd say that Novelty must have been consulting on some technological development by the Indian government, which the Teragens felt posed some threat to them.



CHAPTER 2: STRUCTURE AND GOALS

Founded to help mankind benefit from the awesome powers of the ever-increasing nova population and to foster good relations between normal humans and novas, Project Utopia has grown from its humble, if ambitious, beginnings into an enormous organization influencing policy across the world and acting on a global scale. It may rival the Vatican as the most important and influential organization ever to exist. If the conspiracy theorists are right when they say that the United Nations and the novas are plotting to take over the world, Project Utopia would be the organization spearheading that conquest. Utopia is a roughly hierarchical organization comprising multiple “departments,” each led by a “director” and his or her directorial staff (“DS”) of assistant directors. The board of directors oversees and manages all other departments, which are considered equal in the corporate hierarchy. In actuality, however, some departments, including Science & Technology (and, though it would come as a great surprise to the public, Internal Affairs), wield a decidedly greater influence than others within the organization. Over the board of directors sits the shadow of the Aeon Society, which founded and ultimately owns Project Utopia.

Although widely perceived as a nonprofit charitable institution, Project Utopia is, in fact, a privately owned

nonprofit corporate entity (though it does manage some “pure” charities as subsidiaries). Utopia is organized under- and bound by- the laws of Switzerland, since Swiss corporate and banking privacy laws allow it to avoid making corporate disclosures required by most other countries. While its expenses are enormous, Utopia’s income is more enormous yet and the seemingly bottomless coffers of the Aeon Society are always available should it ever need additional cash flow.

Administration

The “brain” that keeps Project Utopia running smoothly on a daily basis is the Administration Department. Administration employees insure that all Utopia facilities stay in proper repair, all employees have enough office supplies, reports are filed in a timely fashion, budgets are carefully planned and Project Utopia’s needs are seen to. Jobs in Admin are neither particularly glamorous nor exciting, but they’re absolutely vital if the Project is to fulfill its ambitious goals. Fittingly enough for the department at the top of the Utopian food chain (at least on paper), Administration is organized hierarchically. Orders issued by the Director, his office, or the board are obeyed quickly and precisely. At the top of the heap, answering only to the Aeon Society and his own conscience, is Justin J. Laragione, Director of Project Utopia.

Justin J. Laragione

Born in Los Angeles in 1970, Justin J. Laragione has vivid memories of growing up in the wilds of the urban jungle, the only child in a single-parent home. Though his teachers all spoke of his keen intellect and charm, his early academic career would never have led anyone to believe that he would eventually head one of the world’s most powerful organizations. The man who would eventually lead Project Utopia was in no way an ideal student. High school was an afterthought to Laragione, taking a back seat to his “studies” of surfing and martial arts, in that order. Once he graduated from high school, Laragione looked for a job that would keep him near a beach, and he wound up in the Coast Guard. Initially, Laragione was a mechanic on the cutter *Munro*, but under the tutelage of Jeff Vance, his commanding officer and adoptive father figure,



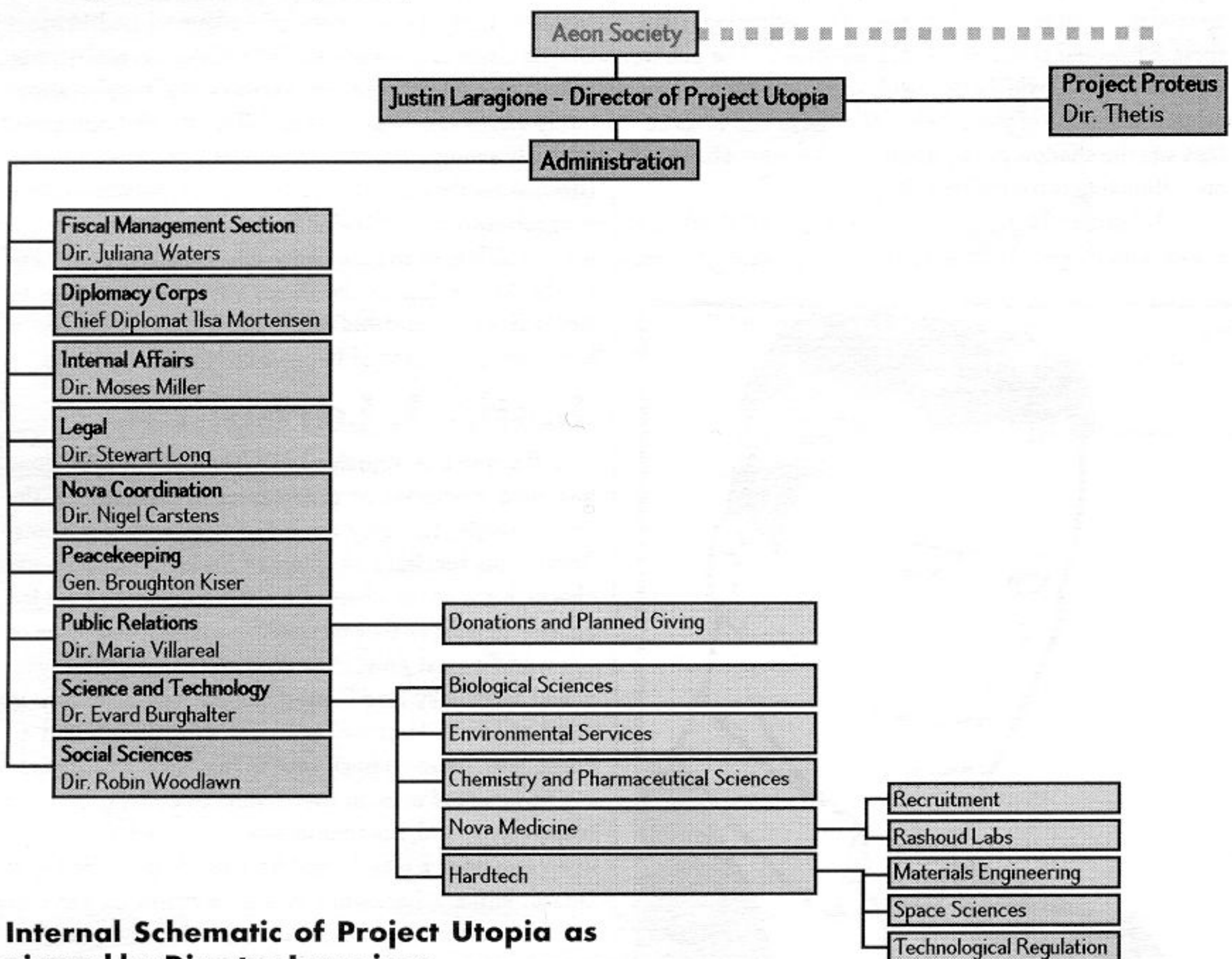
Laragione developed a sense of drive and ambition that took him to Officer Candidate School where his career truly began.

Handsome, quick-witted and charming, Laragione excelled in his study of law and public relations in the military schools he attended. The Coast Guard was sufficiently impressed with his performance to put him through Harvard in exchange for an extended tour of duty. An excellent student, he made it through college effortlessly and proceeded on to law school before getting involved in politics — specifically, foreign-relations apparatus. Ever fervent in his desire to excel, he caught the eye of the State Department in the early 1990s, when he was selected as a junior ambassador to the United Nations. While there, his organizational skills and insightful analyses of foreign affairs kept him in favor, until 1994 when he was appointed Assistant Secretary of State by then-President Bill Clinton. Although he did his job and toed the party line, it was no secret to his friends at the United Nations that he sought a position with more responsibility.

It was during this period that the Aeon Society took note of Laragione's stellar performance and natural organization genius. Realizing that his intelligence and skills were too valuable to waste working for a system he couldn't entirely support, Utopia offered him the perfect job: In 1998, he was chosen as the first — and to date only — Director of Project Utopia.

This was a job Laragione could put his heart into. It suited his natural charm, idealism and drive perfectly. He threw himself into his new duties with zeal and it showed: His charisma helped unite the rapidly growing team. Laragione has met and shaken the hand of every single employee of Project Utopia. His warm but demanding management style was precisely what Utopia needed; the organization began to prosper immediately under his effective, even inspiring leadership.

Today, with 10 years of experience behind him, the Director's sense of enthusiasm and drive remain undiminished. Anyone who talks with him for any length of time can't help but be overcome by his optimism and desire to accomplish great things. However, recent events — the death of his friend Hiram "Slag" Goldberg in combat with the elite Totentanz, the murder of Slider, the seeming infiltration of his organization by Teragen sympathizers — have shaken him. He knows that not even a Utopia can be perfect. He approved the construction of the Bahrain facility, after all, and he is painfully aware of even the shadiest of Proteus' operations, but he is beginning to wonder just where Utopia is going and what it might mean for the planet in the long run. When he thinks too much on such things, Laragione often wishes he could just disappear for a weekend and surf with his friends like he did when he was a younger man without the weight of the world on his shoulders.



Internal Schematic of Project Utopia as viewed by Director Laragione

Laragione's keen intellect, attentive eye and warm relationship with all of Utopia's Directors grant him an almost encyclopedic knowledge of much of what goes on within the organization. He is a vast institutional memory, able to recall how past challenges were met, who is dependable and what various novae in the organization are capable of.

His ideals are the ideals of the organization and it is not an exaggeration to say that Laragione is the heart and soul of Project Utopia. He is well aware of the fact that he would make a prime target for anyone who wanted to strike a blow at the Project, but he has long since come to terms with the dangers of his chosen profession and he fearlessly leads Utopia into what he hopes to be a brighter future for all mankind.

It's Good to be Director

As Director of Project Utopia, Laragione is essentially in command of the organization. While he technically answers to the leadership of the Aeon Society itself, the relationship between Aeon and Utopia is very casual, with most business taking place over friendly dinners at fine restaurants or various high-profile social events. Laragione thinks of Philippa Lavielle more as a mentor or an older sister than as his manager.

Laragione convenes all meetings of the Board of Directors. A three-fourths majority can force a meeting over his objection if necessary, though this has never been done. Otherwise:

- He can dismiss any other employee of Project Utopia, up to and including other Directors
- He can make appointments to fill Directorships and other key positions within Project Utopia (usually subject to a majority vote of approval by the Board of Directors, and with approval from the Aeon Society)
- He can make changes to Project regulations (subject to the same approvals)
- He can increase or decrease salaries, grant or withhold bonuses and otherwise dispense company perks.
- He approves all Project budgets.

The Board of Directors

Ranking immediately below Laragione himself is the Board of Directors, a body composed of the Directors of the other departments. The Board meets a minimum of once a week, on Fridays at noon sharp (lunch is catered in), to review the events of the past week and plan for the upcoming one. These weekly meetings rarely last longer than two hours. In times of crisis, or when other events dictate, additional meetings are called. After the release of the Null Manifesto, the board met an average of 2.3 times per week; following Slider's murder, that number rose to 3.5 for several weeks.

Directorial Staffs

Each Director has a staff of aides, assistants and employees under him. The exact composition and struc-

ture of this group varies (see individual department descriptions, below), but typically a department has one or more assistant directors, who control various other workers. The scope of an assistant director's powers varies depending upon the department, the personal capabilities and charisma of the A.D. and the relationship between the Director and his assistants.

Fiscal Management Section

Keeping track of Utopia's profits and losses, preparing and reviewing department and section budgets and managing subsidiary corporations is the responsibility of the Fiscal Management section of the Administration Department. One of the largest sections in Project Utopia (it dwarfs some entire departments), Fiscal Management employs hundreds of accountants, accounts clerks, financial analysts and auditors. Director Juliana Waters runs this section with an iron fist. An accountant and licensed stockbroker with 40 years of experience in the field, she has a thorough knowledge of the world's business markets and expects all of her employees to keep up to date with the latest economic developments and to perform their work flawlessly. Errors, particularly those that cost the corporation money, infuriate her. On the other hand, when an employee saves the company money or finds a newer, better way to do something, she's equally lavish with her praise. Her oddest habit is her insistence that every employee's birthday be recognized, usually with a small office party thrown by his or her closest colleagues; she seems to have the entire sections' birthdays memorized. Though she'd never admit it, this relates to her belief in, of all things, astrology.

Waters is a well-known fixture at Board of Directors meetings, where she frequently reports on the Project's financial health. She's often called into meetings of Aeon's board of Directors as well and seems to have a very close working relationship with several Aeon employees — something that makes some Utopia Directors a little nervous.

Diplomacy Corps

Team Tomorrow's interventions are occasionally violent and almost always broadcast via OpNet. Unfortunately, this sometimes makes it seem to some people as if Team Tomorrow is just an extension of the XWF. In truth, Project Utopia performs an enormous amount of diplomatic work behind the scenes. It lacks the glamour and fury of a nova conflict; consequently, it doesn't often make the evening news or the N! network, but it's just as important to achieving Project Utopia's goals (if not more so) as any violent conflict.

Spearheading these diplomatic efforts is the Diplomacy Corps, the Project Utopia department devoted to

finding peaceful solutions to the social and political problems that continue to plague the world. As some of its officials are fond of saying, only half in jest, “Terraforming’s not all that hard — dirt and plants don’t talk back to you.”

Getting two peoples that have related to each other through hatred and violence for decades or centuries to talk together peacefully makes Environmental Science’s job look easy. The Diplomacy Corps’s goals are, of course, to resolve potentially violent situations peacefully. Relatively few novas are assigned to it, however, the Corps are always extremely careful never to coerce, or even appear to coerce, different parties into solving their problems. The solution must come from the parties themselves, acting of their own free will, or else it is not only meaningless, but most likely ephemeral as well.

Structure

Because of its need for flexibility, which allows it to respond rapidly and properly to diplomatic situations that shift frequently, the Diplomacy Corps is structured with a much less rigid hierarchy than most Project Utopia departments. While certain forms of protocol are required, the leaders of the Corps and of Project Utopia recognize that different negotiators have different ways of approaching the same problem. Their yardstick is success and achievement, not obedience to a code of rules and regulations.

The Chief Diplomat

The Director of the Diplomacy Corps is Chief Diplomat Ilsa Mortensen, a Swiss diplomat with over two decades’ worth of experience working for the European Union. Mortensen is known for, among other things, her linguistic abilities. She speaks over a dozen languages, including not only those commonly used in the corridors of the United Nations (English, French, German, Russian, Spanish), but several less common but still useful tongues (Arabic, Hindi, Japanese, Swahili, Serbo-Croatian, Turkish). She picks up new languages with ease; she learned Turkish, for example, in three weeks of intensive study prior to beginning some negotiations between Turkey, Syria, Iraq and the Kurdish peoples. Since the study of language goes hand in hand with the study of cultures, Mortensen possesses a copious knowledge of the world’s societies. She understands their historical imperatives, current needs and customs and their perspective on themselves, their neighbors and the world. With understanding comes sympathy and many of the groups with whom she negotiates have stated afterwards that, of all the diplomats they dealt with, only she genuinely seemed to appreciate their position and why they took it. By establishing this sort of bond with her “clients,” as she often calls them, Mortensen is able to achieve rapid, far-reaching results that astound other diplomats.

As the leader of an entire corps of diplomats, Mortensen is not always so successful. A perfectionist

and fussybudget, she has never really learned how to delegate authority and use a support staff. She tries to keep her fingers in every little pie, which not only distracts her attention from the truly important tasks, but antagonizes her staff. Fortunately, most of them are personally loyal to her (the average tenure on her staff is 6 years) and have learned how to adapt their own work habits to her intrusiveness. Mortensen infrequently gets to work alongside Team Tomorrow agent Geisha, whom she admires as a paragon of tact and diplomacy. Working in tandem, the two have brought peace to regions of the globe that had been at war for generations.

Sectional Staffs

In order to allow its negotiators, mediators and “peace ambassadors” (as it often refers to its diplomats) to become thoroughly familiar with the nations and cultures they work with, the Diplomacy Corps divides its staff into “sections” organized along regional lines. Each section is led by an assistant director and holds the responsibility for addressing disputes and conflicts within its “territory.” Some of the most important sections include:

Middle East Section: The Middle East Section is one of the largest and busiest in the Diplomacy Corps. For millennia, the Middle East has been a breeding ground for religious, political and military conflict, and old hatreds die hard. Even the Corps’s brilliant success in 2001, when it negotiated the now-famous London Peace Accord between Israel and Palestine, has not brought complete stability to the region. First, the relationship between Israel and Palestine is one of constant negotiation and compromise — a process that keeps the members of the Middle East Section hopping. Everything from water rights, to airline flight schedules, to seating at international events, has had to be negotiated. Unlike most other sections of the Corps, the Middle East Section is headquartered in Project Utopia’s Israeli-Palestinian border facility. This way it’s always on the scene to deal with any troubles that arise and nip them in the bud.

Middle East Section diplomats have also helped mediate disputes between Iran and Iraq, Syria and Iraq, Syria and Lebanon, Israel and Jordan and Yemen and Eritrea. They are currently working with officials from Syria, Turkey and Iraq in an attempt to establish a nation for the Kurdish people, but thus far their efforts have been in vain. Iraqi and Kurdish extremists have both interrupted the negotiations twice with terrorist attacks; a cadre of troops are now assigned to guard the negotiation sessions at all times. Assistant Director Darton Fitzwalter, a veteran of the United Kingdom’s espionage service, runs the Middle East section. In contrast to the soft-spoken, empathetic Ilsa Mortensen, Fitzwalter is a charge-the-ramparts, take-no-prisoners kind of person whose negotiating style often involves intimidation and scorn. His methods shock most diplomats, but, incomprehensibly, they often seem to work. Those who

know him best say that he possesses great psychological insight, which tells him when to press his point and when to back off and that's the key to his success.

Europe Section: A better name for this group would be "Balkans Section," since the rest of Europe has been at peace for decades. All of the section's resources are focussed on the ethnic disputes and low-intensity wars that constantly rip the Balkans region apart. Following Team Tomorrow's overthrow of the brutal Macedonian dictator Yaroslav Radocani in 2005, the Diplomacy Corps helped to bring the various factions of the Macedonian people together to establish an interim government prior to holding democratic elections. Those elections proceeded reasonably peacefully and the Diplomacy Corps has consequently pulled out of Macedonia. Unfortunately, ongoing ethnic and religious conflicts within and between Serbia, Bosnia, Croatia and Albania have kept the Corps busy elsewhere in the region. One of the Diplomacy Corps's novas, Irena Calpeggio of Italy, heads this section. Able to subtly shift her looks, voice and body language to match the ones the person she's talking with finds the most favorable or comforting, she is often able to put quarrelling negotiators at ease and keep diplomatic meetings on track. Africa Section: Another large section, the so-called "Africa corps" is divided into three sub-sections: West Africa (everything from Nigeria west), East Africa (Chad, North and South Sudan, Somalia, Kenya and so forth) and Central Africa (from Central Africa to Botswana, excluding Kenya). Each section deals with the disputes that arise in its particular region, but since African conflicts often spill over from one country or tribe to another, they often work together closely. At present, all of the sections are busy. West Africa is helping to negotiate disputes between the various nations involved in the Equatorial Wars of 2001. Each of them has certain grievances and claims against the others and negotiating this web of argument and rancor has taxed the sub-section's resources. Still, some substantial progress has been made and the West African Section's diplomats remain optimistic.

Similarly, the East Africa subsection has been trying to create good working relations between the new nations of North Sudan and South Sudan, which still have a great deal of animosity toward each other. Fortunately, the economic prosperity of Ethiopia has acted as a social and political anchor for the region, diminishing or abolishing other disputes and freeing the East Africa subsection to deal almost exclusively with the Sudan situation. Currently, the Central Africa sub-section has the hardest job of all; it's trying to put the shattered region back together following the Trans-Tanzanian Conflict of 2007. The Conflict left Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Rwanda and Tanzania without effective governments and, in many places, with no functioning infrastructure. With various warlords, power brokers and government officials jockeying for power in individual nations, or even across the entire region, the

subsection has had to work toward its goal of regional peace one tiny conflict at a time. Fortunately, its ability to call in Team Tomorrow to deal with recalcitrant groups of soldiers and elites (and the officials who hire them) has given them a measure of respectability, and thanks to the charitable works Project Utopia and the Aeon Society have undertaken in the region, it has even become popular, a fact that simplifies its work immensely.

Assistant Director Martin Zeleny coordinates the activities of the three subsections and liaisons with other branches of Project Utopia when their help proves necessary to protect his diplomats or resolve a dangerous or difficult situation. Zeleny dislikes spending time "in the field," preferring instead to orchestrate operations from his desk in Geneva, or a satellite office he maintains in Project Utopia's Addis Ababa facility. Indian Subcontinent Section: Due to the recent conflicts in the Kashmir region, ongoing tension on a variety of other matters between Pakistan and India and the ethnic and religious hatreds that often permeate the region, the Indian Subcontinent Section remains frantically busy virtually all the time. Aeon Society charitable works and the flood of money coming into India due to its rising prominence in the worldwide film industry, have done little to ease these problems. The intractability of China, India and Pakistan regarding Kashmir only makes the situation worse. Assistant Director Roger Crosby is beginning to feel increasingly frustrated and he's taking his problems out on his staff. Morale in the section is quite low; they need a major victory to get them focused and back on track, but no such victory is on the horizon.

Indian Overwatch

Because India remains densely populated and, in many regions, desperately poor and lacking in resources like televisions, novas who erupt here often remain undiscovered by the greater world far longer than novas in more developed regions. Most of these rural novas are happy to be seen as gods by their villages and they find themselves content to be very large fish in a very small pond. Unfortunately, this also gives other groups that would like to exploit novas an opening they're happy to take advantage of. Some of these organizations have agents in the region, including plants in the Indian Subcontinent Section, since its members have strong contacts throughout the area. Followers of Divis Mal and his Teragen philosophy have not infiltrated any official organizations in the region, but the wing called the Casablanecas maintains many safehouses and hidden facilities here (it doesn't take much to bribe impoverished people to keep their mouths shut, especially when you provide them with an example of exactly what happens to anyone who talks). By keeping their ears to the ground and paying lavishly for useful information, the Casablanecas are often able to track down new novas before anyone else and "pitch" them on the Teragen way of thinking before an Intervention Team from Project Utopia can "corrupt" them.

The Utopian Center for Diplomacy and Peace

The Diplomacy Corps has its own headquarters, the Utopian Center for Diplomacy and Peace, located in Geneva, Switzerland. Designed by world-famous nova architect Piotr Enrikssen, it is a unique and striking building and the pride of the Corps. While most of the Center is devoted to office space, conference rooms (some of them enormous) and auditoriums, its facilities also include several unusual resources. The sub-basement level includes a large print shop where the Corps's briefing books and other printed materials are assembled. The third floor is occupied by the Conflict Monitoring Center (also known, ironically, as the "War Room"). The Center is a large, computer- and video screen-filled room that attempts to track every single ongoing conflict in the world and the Diplomacy Corps's efforts to resolve them. One entire wall features an electronic map of the world, with conflict regions indicated in red. The Center's computer systems can create a "breakout window" for any given conflict that provides a close-up view including the latest information on troop placements and movements and screen boxes containing relevant data. If a conflict escalates, the Center's systems can automatically alert Team Tomorrow and send it to bring the situation under control.

Internal Affairs

Most of Project Utopia's departments and operations are up-front affairs that welcome media inquiry and involvement. Project Utopia officials have often said that their activities are intended to benefit all mankind and that nothing it does needs to remain hidden from the people whose lives it wishes to improve. For the most part, this laudable attitude even extends to the operations of its Internal Affairs Department.

Internal Affairs was initially established in 1998 as part of the original structure of Project Utopia. Its duties at that time chiefly related to accounting, certain types of project oversight and the prevention of internal theft, embezzlement and the like. However, shortly thereafter, when it became apparent that various governments were trying to insert intelligence agents into the Project, its role was expanded significantly. In mid-2000, an anonymous tip reached Ricardo Montoya-Bernal, one of the leading members of Team Tomorrow. The tipster claimed to be a big fan of Montoya-Bernal's and an ardent believer in Project Utopia's goals. She said that she was employed "in a clerical position" in the headquarters of the Central Intelligence Agency in Langley, Virginia. Although she didn't know the full extent of what was going on, she had reason to believe, based on documents she had seen, that the CIA was attempting to infiltrate Project Utopia to gather technical and economic intelligence, particularly anything related to nova pow-

ers and physiology. She did not know if this operation was only under discussion or had gone forward; if the latter, she didn't know how many operatives, or which ones, were involved. Nevertheless she felt it was her duty to humanity to warn Project Utopia of this potential threat. Montoya-Bernal, unsure of whether the tip was the work of some anonymous crackpot or a genuinely concerned citizen, turned it over to Director Laragione and asked him to address the problem. Laragione contacted some old friends of his in the American State Department and then shared the news with the Board of Directors. Perturbed by what they heard, the Directors opted to take the information seriously. That left them with a pretty problem: what to do about it. They were a charitable organization, not an espionage agency. Fortunately, a recent recruit presented them with the answer to their dilemma. Moses Miller, a young man from Memphis, Tennessee, had erupted in December 1999, gaining immense intuitive abilities in design and engineering. After several months' worth of training, he had become an extremely productive member of the Science & Technology staff, using his powers to design new interface systems for their computers. That, however, was a waste of his full talents. Prior to erupting he'd been a highly placed counterintelligence officer in the United States Army's Intelligence and Security Command (INSCOM). He hated the Army and knew that they would find "ways" of keeping him in if he told them about his new abilities, so he finished his time and left for Project Utopia immediately afterward. As it just so happened, he was just the sort of person the Project needed.

Once his intelligence background was made known, Miller was pulled from S&T within the hour. Before he knew what was happening, he was standing before the Board of Directors being offered an interim assistant director position as head of a new counterintelligence unit within the Internal Affairs department. Once the directors explained why the offer was being made, his eyes lit up and he took the assignment immediately. He'd never liked dealing with those pricks at Central Intelligence and now he had the chance to pay them back for all that "need to know" grief they gave him when he was in INSCOM. Within weeks, Miller had hand-picked some personnel from IA and other departments (including another nova or two) and trained them in basic counterintelligence techniques. He then sent them back to their old jobs with instructions to remain watchful for infiltrators. Meanwhile he designed and wrote ultra-sophisticated new software to troll through Utopia's datanets, looking for unusual data downloads or other signs of unlawful systems entry. A couple of months later, acting on some information in one of his "agents' " reports, he tracked down the CIA's agent, questioned him and had him dismissed and barred from Utopia. The entire affair became something of an embarrassment for the CIA, particularly within the intelligence community. Miller prepared to go back to his old job with Science & Technol-

ogy, but the Board of Directors was getting other ideas. They realized that the United States wouldn't be the last government to try to get information from Project Utopia. The organization needed to prepare for such "attacks" before it suffered irreparable harm. If a nation like China were to steal sensitive data and use it in a conflict to obtain a military advantage, Project Utopia would be blamed. The Project owed it to the world to protect its own data carefully, lest it fall into the wrong hands. To address this problem, Moses Miller was appointed to lead a new "Counterintelligence Section" of IA and given the authority and resources to buy equipment and hire appropriately skilled personnel to assist him. As Project Utopia's operations became more important and sensitive, Counterintelligence's responsibilities increased. However, in keeping with its image, Utopia made most information about Internal Affairs public. Its office, personnel and activities were, for the most part, subject to public scrutiny and reported to the world press regularly by Utopia's spokespersons.

"We have nothing to hide," said Director Laragione. "The people of the world have put their trust in us and we must repay that trust at every turn."

This sincere display of candor more than offset whatever negative public opinion derived from the revelation of petty thefts and other such incidents within Utopia.

In 2004, Miller was named Director of Internal Affairs. By this time the counterintelligence mission and the policing of Utopia employees who engaged in theft or other such activities, had assumed primary importance in the department (even though only one other spy was uncovered by Miller and his staff during the intervening time period). In 2005, following the publication of the Null Manifesto and the revelation of the "Teragen threat," its powers increased even more. Utopia employees in sensitive positions could count on being contacted by Internal Affairs "agents" for questioning at least once a year and often more; some came to believe that IA personnel followed them everywhere. Internal Affairs "spooks" were soon among the most hated people in the organization, but filled with pride of purpose (and, perhaps, an inflated sense of the threat they were opposing), they shrugged off the animosity. For the good of the organization, no Utopia employee publicly expressed any reservations about IA; indeed, most praised its accomplishments.

Today Internal Affairs continues to wield broad powers within the Project Utopia structure. Director Justin J. Laragione has become a close personal friend of Moses Miller and trusts him implicitly. Internal Affairs primarily manages the security measures for all Utopia facilities. Its secondary responsibilities include ferreting out Teragen agents and sympathizers, interviewing potential employees for security threats and poking its nose in where (according to anyone other than itself) it doesn't belong in the name of security.

Director Moses Miller

Moses Miller is a tall, broad-shouldered, athletically trim African-American man in his late 20s, making him the youngest member of Project Utopia's Board of Directors. Despite his outwardly affable nature, Miller has made few friends in the organization; his job, naturally enough, makes people nervous about associating with him too closely.

Miller was raised in Memphis in a strict Southern Baptist family. He excelled at school and at sports, earning a full scholarship to Grambling. Rather than take some of the potentially lucrative opportunities available to him after graduation, he joined the U.S. Army, where his obvious intelligence got him assigned to INSCOM. He spent several years working in counterintelligence and hated every moment of it. He was extremely pleased to leave the Army and join the private sector.

Although his nova abilities are no match for the likes of Caestus Pax, Miller isn't someone most people would care to trifle with in combat. In addition to his Quantum-based abilities (which, in combat, allow him to stun opponents with bolts of electricity), he is an expert marksman and usually carries a powerful semi-automatic pistol loaded with armor piercing ammunition at all times. He has a black belt in karate and also practices aikijutsu; his enhanced reaction time and moderately enhanced strength make him a deadly hand to hand opponent.

Director Miller runs Internal Affairs with military precision. Everyone knows his place and responds with a "Sir!" to any instructions from a higher-ranking employee.

Assistant Director Josephine O' Reardon

Director Miller's right-hand woman, hatchet-person and chief assistant is Josephine O' Reardon, an Irish national who's been with Project Utopia from its inception. Despite having no known background in intelligence work, she was transferred from her original assignment in S&T/Recruitment to Internal Affairs by Miller during his initial, "temporary," tenure. She has not left the department since (persistent rumors within the department that she formerly belonged to the Provisional Irish Republican Army have been repeatedly investigated but never proven). O'Reardon seems to share Director Miller's suspicious nature and his desire to enforce military-style discipline within the department, but approaches things much more harshly than he does. More than once she's given some errant agent a shrill dressing-down for some real or perceived failure on his part; her temper is legendary and all agents do their best to stay on her good side.

Technical Specialist Iosif Valcescu

Like any counterintelligence agency, Internal Affairs needs certain types of advanced technology —

“bug detectors,” for example — to do its job. In fact, since it has to be prepared for the possibility of nova infiltrators and saboteurs, it needs more types of equipment and that equipment often has to be sturdier and function more efficiently than civilian versions of the same device. The man responsible for keeping the IA arsenal stocked with such items is Iosif Valcescu, a Romanian who holds the position of “Technical Specialist.” In shortest terms and the most convenient definitions, he’s “Q” to Internal Affairs’ “James Bond.” A handsome man in his late 40s, Valcescu defies the normal lab-rat stereotype of nerdy men who relate better to devices than to other people. He’s outgoing and friendly, a regular on what you might call the Utopia “party circuit,” and close friends with several members of Team Tomorrow (including Caestus Pax, with whom he’s worked closely on certain projects he can’t speak about).

Valcescu’s talent for implementing complex systems fits hand-in-glove with Miller’s nova aptitude for software and technology design. The two play off each other’s scientific expertise to create counter-intelligence equipment so subtle and sophisticated that it’s far beyond anything even the United States government possesses. Given that he also has access to the contraband technologies confiscated by Utopia’s S&T division, Valcescu can provide his section with access to items so advanced as to be alien, even to most physicists. Valcescu may not have nova powers, but his astonishing gadgets more than compensate.

Inspection Teams

Internal Affairs field employees (usually referred to as “operatives”) normally work in groups of two to six members called inspection teams. When internal wrongdoing or a security leak is suspected, IA sends in an Inspection Team to investigate and, as necessary, report back or take steps to correct the problem. Members of Inspection Teams refer to each other by last name only (“Ms. Ravnputra,” “Mr. Green”), but employees who try to trace those names back through company records rarely find that the employee with that name is a perfect match for the person they met. Although no ranks or titles are ever spoken, it’s apparent from the way they act that every member of an Inspection Team knows who among them is in charge.

Inspection Team members wear standard business dress, not any sort of uniform. Many of them seem to have a penchant for black and other somber hues, as if deliberately trying to set themselves apart from the typically much more colorfully garbed employees of other departments.

The overall commander of the Inspection Teams is Assistant Director Athena Boyd, an American who claims descent from settlers who sailed to the New World aboard the *Mayflower*. Although short and soft-spoken, she nevertheless carries a certain aura of authority about her. Inspection Team members seem to take it for granted

that she is a nova of some sort because her keen eye misses nothing, but no one has ever seen her actually use any nova powers.

Legal

It has cleaned up the environment, put a woman on the moon (without technological assistance) and terraformed the Ethiopian desert, but it can’t get rid of the lawyers. Even the mighty Project Utopia, for all the nova powers at its command, can’t escape the need for lawyers. Every day, some use for them arises — and since Project Utopia operates on a global scale, performing missions in multiple countries around the world, it must have on staff not only experts in international law (everything from extradition law, to international taxation, to international trade law), but experts on the law of every country it works in. It’s the only way to avoid a morass of complications, lawsuits and delays based on the differences between the legal systems of the nations of the world. Besides just smoothing the way for many different Utopia operations, the Legal department also fends off the hundreds, sometimes thousands, of lawsuits filed against Project Utopia each year. Given the scope of Project Utopia’s operations, it’s not surprising that, sometimes, someone gets hurt or feels they’ve lost money because of something a Utopia employee did. This can range from suffering an injury inflicted by falling debris during a cleanup operation to business lost when a crowd gathers in front of a store to gawk at a visiting Tomorrowite, thereby blocking customer traffic, to reductions in crop prices caused by terraforming projects, to just about anything else the cupiditous mind of man can concoct. It’s plain for everyone to see that Project Utopia has mighty deep pockets and many litigants hope that the Project will settle with them just to avoid the inconvenience, embarrassment and potential loss in a trial. They couldn’t be more wrong. Utopia takes a very aggressive stance towards lawsuits, especially “nuisance suits,” and fights them regardless of whether it loses money doing so.

Significant cases are handled by a special group of Utopia attorneys, nicknamed “the Hit Squad,” who travel around the world trying cases. The Hit Squad’s members are experts in the tort law in a dozen major countries and well-versed in many other legal subjects as well. If necessary, they hire local talent to assist them with the details of a case; many lawyers jump at the chance to work with such top-flight legal talent, even though a couple have suffered repercussions from disgruntled losers after assisting the Hit Squad. While the Squad’s vast knowledge of law the world over is their primary strength, it helps that three of the five are novas with quantum-enhanced social skills. While this is suggested relatively frequently, Utopia maintains strict secrecy around this fact. To date, the Hit Squad has not lost a single court case.

Although it has its own Director — Stewart Long, a graduate of Stanford Law School — and technically is considered a separate department, Legal virtually operates as a sub-branch of Administration. The two departments share offices and support personnel in one wing of the Addis Ababa headquarters and Long speaks almost daily with Director Laragione to keep him apprised of legal issues facing the Project. Utopia's lawyers aren't just reactive; they take steps outside of fighting lawsuits to help their employer. Thanks to them, laws expanding and enforcing the civil rights of all humans, baseline and nova alike, have been passed in dozens of countries and loopholes in international criminal and environmental law have been eliminated. They like to say they're "building the legal framework of the future, one law at a time," and in many ways that's absolutely accurate.

Nova Coordination

This small, but nevertheless vital, department, headquartered in Addis Ababa, performs only one function: it analyzes and reallocates as necessary, Project Utopia's nova assets. Keeping track of the enormous number of novas that Utopia employs, keeps on retainer, occasionally calls on, is owed favor, or counts as friendly in some other way is a full time job for an entire branch or the organization. The staff of Nova Coordination spends its time studying disaster reports, debriefing reports from Team Tomorrow, news articles about novas and medical evaluations of all Utopia-affiliated novas. It maintains a comprehensive database of all known incidents in which novas featured prominently. It then compares these incidents to compile statistical studies of what types of disasters are likely to occur where (and when), which nova powers are most effective in different situations or against different opponents and the optimal combinations of the nova powers displayed by the members of Team Tomorrow. Based on its analyses, it may recommend reassignment of some members of Team Tomorrow to different branches, have the organization actively recruit a known nova who's not yet a member to fill a "gap in the line," and so forth.

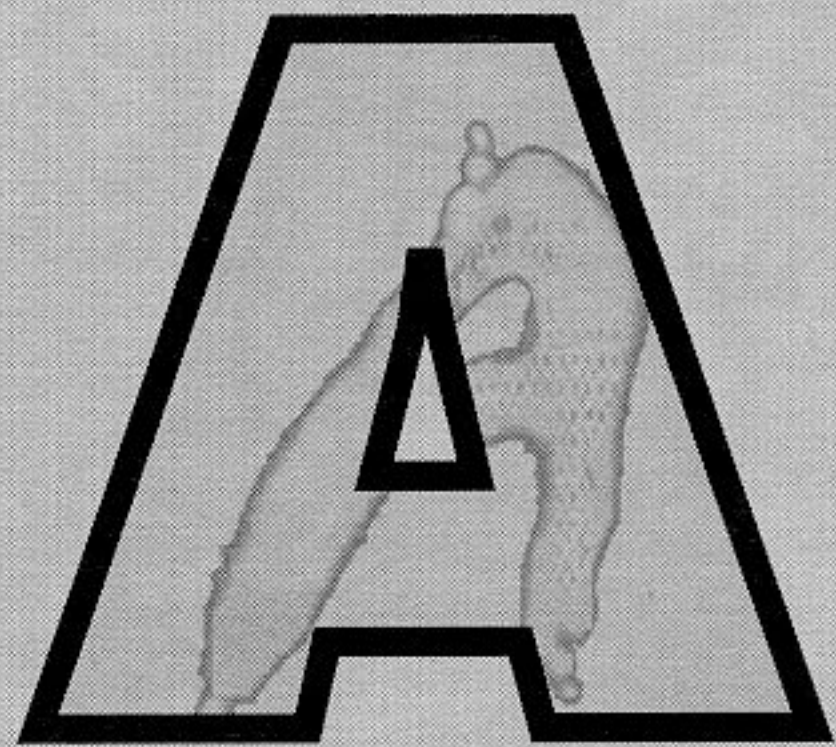
Director Nigel Carstens, a psychiatrist specializing in nova psychology, leads this group of dedicated statisticians and analysts. Although not a nova, he possesses the enviable ability to thrive on no more than three hours of sleep a night. Those hours are typically 1:00 a.m. to 4:00 a.m.; the rest of the time he works. By even the most generous definition, he's a workaholic; he's taken one three-day vacation in five years and even then he kept in constant touch with the office. He claims that being away from the office triggers anxiety attacks that last for days, so he stays in the office with his data and facts. Utopia has rewarded his dedication by building a luxurious apartment into his office, eliminating the need

for him to leave. His wife left him long ago; while he didn't particularly notice, he covered up what pain there was by working all the harder. Doctor Carstens is, perhaps, the world's leading expert on the effects of novas and nova powers on the physical world and on the novas themselves. His mind is filled with minute details about virtually every known nova. Currently, Dr. Carstens and his staff are fascinated with the elusive Divis Mal. He's obviously a nova, although a number of things about him don't quite add up; they are spending a great deal of working time chasing down every lead on him and his whereabouts. The current theory is that the elusive Mal leaves the planet for extended periods of time for purposes unknown.

The Nova Coordination Department is not popular with Team Tomorrow or the other novas working for Project Utopia. In their eyes, Carstens and crew move them about like pieces on a chessboard, treating them more as assets or weapons than as human beings. A few, including the popular Team Tomorrow member Ewen "The Apollo Kid" Banks, have even left Utopia's employ rather than be subjected to Carstens' seemingly whimsical ideas of where they should be assigned next.

A Serpent in Their Midst

One of the analysts working in Nova Coordination, a young British man named Rodney Archer, has developed distinct Aberrant sympathies. A long-time fan of André Corbin (and a friend of his while Corbin was on Team Tomorrow), he does not believe that Corbin killed Slider or did any of the other things he's been accused of. He's secretly passed some important departmental data to Corbin and will continue to do so (though he has no knowledge of Corbin's whereabouts; he sends him information from an OpCafe in a neighboring town through an anonymous OpNet remailing site). He believes that Corbin has been framed and those suspicions may lead him to start poking around in the hopes of finding information to exonerate his friend.



Peacekeeping

Despite its peaceful and progressive goals, Project Utopia recognizes that sometimes even peaceful men must fight to preserve that which is worthwhile — particularly in a world where not everyone shares the desire for world peace and the advancement of humanity. When it's time for Project Utopia to draw a line in the sand, it calls in its Peacekeeping Department to handle the job.

Peacekeeping is an odd cross between a private mercenary firm (such as Executive Action, Sandline and others that have proliferated since the early 1990s) and an arm of the United Nations. The UN does not, of course, maintain its own army or navy, but can and often does, call on member nations to provide troops and logistical support for military operations such as peacekeeping or pro-

Peacekeeping Equipment

Peacekeeping Department troops carry equipment designed especially for them by the Science & Technology Department. Whenever they go into the field, they wear QuanTech body armor and helmets (for actual combat, this gear is issued in drab colors; for missions where Peacekeeping needs to maintain a clearly visible presence, it comes in the force's distinctive khaki and white colors). Communications gear — the rugged and hardened UCR radio — is built into the helmet. The standard armament is the U7 Battle Rifle, an assault rifle firing caseless 5.56mm rounds (use the statistics for "Rifle" in the **Aberrant** Appendix, but the weapon can perform the Automatic Fire, Multiple Shots and Semiautomatic Burst maneuvers; the U7's magazine holds up to 40 rounds). Additional sidearms in 9mm are also available as needed or required.

Peacekeeping does not possess any military equipment heavier than armored personnel carriers (APCs), though it does have some troop transport planes, helicopters, cargo carriers and similar vehicles. Most such equipment was purchased from the United States or Israel and upgraded by Science & Technology to improve its performance.



tection of refugees. The Peacekeeping Department (whose name clearly indicates its purpose) is, essentially, a private military company which only the UN can “hire” (in fact, all of Peacekeeping’s costs are covered by Project Utopia or the Aeon Society as a form of “global charity”).

Since its formation in 2000, Peacekeeping has seen action on the UN’s behalf in the Balkans, Kashmir, Central Africa, parts of South America, the Spratly Islands, the Middle East and elsewhere. Unlike the other departments, which are organized along corporate lines, Peacekeeping is decidedly paramilitary. Its Director is more often referred to by the title “General,” and his underlings are colonels, majors, captains and so on. Peacekeeping personnel wear distinctive white and khaki uniforms, use military jargon and so forth. The Peacekeeping Department includes about 3,000 fighting troops, plus associated support personnel.

When the United Nations feels that it needs troops

the vagaries of combat involving quantum-powered humans. For particularly dangerous or difficult missions not requiring its full-time presence, T2M may temporarily assign one or more of its members to Peacekeeping to assist the soldiers with their mission.

Public Relations

If Utopia knows how to do anything well, it’s playing the media for its own purposes. Since day one, it has used the media to make sure that the people of the world see it as the benevolent force that it is. The spin doctors, marketing managers and social psychologists in charge of this aspect of the corporation belong to the Public Relations Department. Although usually thought of as little more than the branch that cranks out press releases and gives statements to the media about routine operations, Public Relations does decidedly more than that. It is, among other things, a laboratory specializing in demographics, psychology and public perception — and how to manipulate them. Its primary goal, as well as its *raison d’etre*, is to make Project Utopia look good at all times, whether that means bringing Team Tomorrow in to talk to disabled children, spreading the good environmental news, informing the world about T2M’s latest benevolent deeds, or spinning the murder of Jennifer Landers to minimize damage to the organization. Unlike most Utopia employees, who tend to be an optimistic and far-thinking bunch, members of the Public Relations Department are often decidedly cynical. While they believe in Utopia’s ultimate goal (or at least in their paychecks), their jobs make it difficult for them to trust anyone or anything they hear. They devote their entire careers to manipulating facts, slanting statistics, creating stories and helping the public believe in comforting not-quite-truths.

Maria Villareal, the fourth daughter of a Spanish aristocrat, is the Director of Public Relations, a job for which she is ideally suited. Besides her degrees and years of experience in social psychology and marketing, she is also well-acquainted, through her family, with the “beautiful people” of Europe and the Americas. She’s often seen attending fabulous parties, cotillions and balls, lounging on the deck of this or that billionaire’s yacht, or dating some nova or movie star. She’s nearly a celebrity in her own right and the glamour surrounding her makes the media all the more inclined to listen when she gets up on stage in the Press Room to give yet another glowing report about some accomplishment of Project Utopia’s. She loves her life and would never consciously do anything to jeopardize it, but her lifestyle (which involves occasional brief affairs with married men) may leave her open to blackmail or outside manipulation. Disliking meetings and business protocol intensely, Villareal often delegates responsibilities involving those things (including attending Board of Directors meetings) to her Assistant Di-

General Orders

Although he doesn’t enjoy the full confidence of the Board of Directors, it is unlikely that General Broughton will be replaced anytime soon. He has powerful friends looking out for him — Director Thetis and the rest of Project Proteus. The General has been a part of Proteus for some time and often assigns his most discreet troops, a group he calls the Black Squad, to carry out missions on Proteus’s behalf.

for a mission, it almost always contacts Project Utopia first (assuming the mission is one that can be handled by the organization, based on troop needs and other considerations). The Board of Directors must vote on any use of the troops (and the Aeon Society must approve any such decision), but rarely turns down a UN request.

General Broughton Kiser commands the Peacekeeping forces. A veteran of the United States Army, he has a keen mind for military matters and is generally respected by his troops. If he has a significant failing as a commander, it’s that he’s too quick to choose the military option over other courses of action. There are many within Project Utopia, including some on the Board of Directors, who feel that the commander of Utopia’s troops should be a little more circumspect; some of these have even begun hinting to Director Laragione that Broughton should be replaced.

Their usual choice as replacement is Broughton’s second-in-command, Colonel Sylvie Fraison. Formerly a colonel in the French armed forces, Colonel Fraison seems to have a fine appreciation for when to use her troops and when to back off and let the diplomats (or Team Tomorrow) handle the situation. Unbeknownst to her supporters, Colonel Fraison has a minor drinking problem, but it’s nothing she hasn’t been able to keep under control — so far. Although no novas are assigned to Peacekeeping on a permanent basis, its troops often work closely with Team Tomorrow and are used to dealing with

rector, Joji “Jay” Hidaki. The cousin of Team Tomorrow Europe nova Ichiko “Geisha” Iko, Jay is a serious, dedicated man who shares little of his comrades’ cynicism. He thinks of himself less as a propagandist and more as an evangelist spreading a word that needs to be spread.

Donations and Planned Giving

Project Utopia’s Donations section, which accepts gifts of cash and property from private citizens, is a part of the Public Relations Department. Since Project Utopia has done such a good job of selling itself and of living up to its promises, millions of people around the world have come to believe fervently in its mission and vision. Some of these people want to donate money or goods to help the Project meet its goals and help the people of the world. Donations help them do that, whether through a bequest in a will or a direct gift during life. However, Project Utopia policies strictly prohibit taking donations from any business entity which competes in a field in which it or its subsidiaries do business (see below), to avoid any appearance of favoritism or impropriety. Assistant Director Omotunde Bankole, a financial wizard from Nigeria, runs the Donations and Planned Giving section. He and his staff are masters at helping people arrange their estates to leave property to Utopia. His job requires him to stay on top of the Project’s physical and financial needs, so that he can best instruct people as to what property Utopia has the most use for.

Science and Technology

“Scientific study and advancement remain dear to the heart of Project Utopia’s mission. The existence of novas has given us new insight into virtually every scientific field, especially the biological sciences and allowed us to perform feats that would once have occurred only in the realm of science fiction. One need only visit the Ethiopian highlands to see the proof of this statement, or view the footage of Team Tomorrow members on the surface of the moon. Science will help bring about a beautiful future and Project Utopia will take us all there.” — Project Utopia Director Justin J. Laragione in a speech to the General Assembly, September 30, 2007

The largest and in many ways best known, of the Project Utopia departments is Science and Technology, or, as it is commonly called, S&T. Most of the achievements with which people associate Project Utopia — ecological cleanup and repair, technology monitoring, terraforming and the like — come from this department.

Departmental Structure

The Science and Technology Department is divided into multiple “sections,” each devoted to a particular

scientific field or discipline (or, in matters of great importance, a single project or experiment). Some of the most prominent or significant are discussed below. For administrative purposes, the sections are grouped into three “divisions” — Environmental, Medical and Hardtech — as follows:

Environmental: Biological Sciences, Environmental Services

Medical: Chemical & Pharmaceutical Sciences, Eruption Research Project, Nova Medicine, Recruitment

Hardtech: Materials Engineering, Space Sciences, Technological Regulation

Director Dr. Evard Burghalter

Known as “Doc” by his immediate staff, Evard Burghalter, a native of Germany, heads the S&T department. He was appointed to his present position in 2003 by Director Laragione following the sudden and unexpected death of his predecessor, Dr. Bodil Sutherland, in an automobile accident. He’s 47 years old, has a wife and three daughters and raises and breeds hunting terriers in his spare time.

A large, jovial man whose frequent mock-gruffness hides his general shyness and dislike of interacting with other people, Dr. Burghalter does his best to make S&T an enjoyable place to work. Nevertheless, he expects everything to run smoothly, all protocols and hierarchies to be observed and all schedules to be met.

Although he’s a skilled administrator, Dr. Burghalter’s training and first love is physics. He enjoys nothing more than tackling a tough question of physics and worrying at it until he’s solved it to his own satisfaction. Fascinated by novas and the questions they raise since the appearance of the Fireman in 1998, he concentrated his research on them, hoping to find the key to the Grand Unification Theory. While that sort of groundbreaking discovery hasn’t materialized for him yet, his work is solid and respected within the scientific community. Burghalter relies on several assistants to keep “his” department functioning efficiently. His secretary Amy Mitchell is a master at juggling schedules and deadlines so that everyone can attend. His laboratory assistant Phillip Juneau keeps all of his personal experiments and projects humming along while he attends to administrative matters. Another assistant, Klemens Bendeki, who holds the position of “Scientific Resources Coordinator,” ensures that few conflicts arise regarding the use of laboratory time or equipment (and that those which do occur are quickly resolved, before Dr. Burghalter has to trouble himself with them).

Doctors Mazarin and Rashoud

Although not formally a part of the leadership of S&T, since they prefer not to devote significant amounts of their time to administrative duties, Henri Mazarin and Farah Rashoud are the real powers in this department. Anything they ask for, they get and everyone knows that

their “suggestions” are in fact orders, even if they don’t think of them that way. Dr. Rashoud spends most of her time working at various “Rashoud facilities,” testing new novas and teaching them about their powers. Her main area of interest these days is trying to determine why some people erupt, why others with latent nodes never do and how personal perceptions and circumstances affect the nature of a nova’s powers. Dr. Rashoud is troubled by the fact that it is not yet possible to predict who will manifest nova powers or what type of powers they will have. She recognizes that the stressors precipitating an eruption seem to influence the powers obtained, but she is unable to isolate a mechanic to explain this. Her working theory — that any nova can do anything, but is limited in the exercise of his powers by psychological factors — is one she keeps to herself, since its implications scare her. She is charting the growing power of the earliest novas with some interest, since they would seem to indicate that the more experience a nova has with his powers, the broader and more powerful they become — which tends to validate her theory. Doctor Mazarin, on the other hand, works closely with Biological Sciences and Nova Medicine to study the basic biological factors behind eruption and other facets of nova life. He has spent years trying to isolate the precise genetic factors which make one person susceptible to eruption in the right circumstances and prevent another from ever erupting at all. Although he possesses the world’s largest database on nova genetics, he has still only been able to study only a fraction of the known existing novas, which frustrates him greatly. He has yet to make what he refers to as “significant progress” in determining the origins of the Mazarin-Rashoud node. Mazarin feels some personal pressure to follow up his Nobel Prize-winning discovery with a finding of like import (he loathes the thought of being a “one-hit wonder,” preferring instead to be remembered for a lifetime of scientific triumphs — he is more than a bit vain, though he hides it well). Based on his studies, he suspects that the Aeon Society’s annual tally of the number of novas on the planet is a gross underestimation.

Biological Sciences

The largest of the S&T sections, Biology studies life, its building blocks and how to manipulate them. Much of its research is, of course, focused on novas, many of whom have unique and fascinating biologies. Rigorous safety regulations are, of course, used to keep the samples safe (and, perhaps, the world safe from the samples). Assistant Director Eliz Balogh heads Biological Sciences with a calm self-assuredness. With a medical degree and two Ph.D. in related fields, she is one of the most educated people in S&T. While not given to leaps of scientific brilliance (some colleagues describe her work as “plodding” and her personality as “colorless”), she works steadily towards important discoveries and breakthroughs, announcing her finding only when

they’ve been checked and double-checked.

Many other prominent scientists work in Biological Sciences, which most members of the scientific community regard as one of the most “glamorous” appointments in Project Utopia and even the entire field of science. They include:

—Dr. Abdullah Abu Yasir, a notorious womanizer whose pioneering work in the field of contraceptives is jokingly referred to by his colleagues as his “personal security research.”

—Dr. Milada Coe, a surgeon who’s one of the leaders in the new field of neurological regrowth and transplantation techniques.

—Dr. Burian Dyachenko, a protege of Henri Mazarin who is, after Mazarin and Rashoud themselves, perhaps the world’s leading expert in the nature and effects of the Mazarin-Rashoud node.

—Dr. Declan Barram, an eminent microbiologist and expert on cellular processes.

Biological Sciences often works closely with Chemistry & Pharmaceuticals and Nova Medicine. Together the three sections comprise one of the world’s most advanced “think tanks” on nova biology and human biology in general.

Environmental Services

Environmental Services, sometimes also known as Ecological Engineering, is a broad section encompassing the many disciplines needed to terraform barren regions and perform ecological triage in combat-ravaged areas and repair on the entire planet: naturalists, marine biologists, geologists, dendrologists, climatologists, pallinologists, lagologists and many other types of scientists find their home here. Based in Project Utopia’s Addis Ababa headquarters, so that it can keep an eye on the end results of Operation Eden, Environmental Engineering is the “media darling” of S&T. It is, after all, the backbone of the projects that cleaned up the world’s pollution and turned deserts into farms, and that plays well on television. It’s the only branch of S&T to have its own fan-generated OpSites, for example. Thus, scientists used to having to explain to people what they do — even what the title means — have been hit by a little celebrity allure. The other S&T “faculty” members tease them about it a lot, but they know it’s just jealousy. Since its discipline is so broad and the projects it attempts so enormous in scope, Environmental Engineering has been organized into several divisions:

—Earth Sciences addresses issues relating to soil, geology, weather patterns and the like; it takes the point in all terraforming projects (of which over a dozen are currently under consideration).

—Biospherics studies ecological webs and determines how species in a given area interrelate, what plant

Dr. Spencer "Antaeus" Balmer

If the success of Utopia's terraforming operations can be attributed to a single individual (and it almost can be), that individual would be Spencer Balmer. Dr. Balmer is an ecologist with a Ph.D. in environmental science from Oxford and a love and reverence for nature that is the focus of his life. In his younger days, just after getting his doctorate, Balmer — enraged by the ecological devastation that surrounded him in his native Manchester and inspired by an ecotage (ecological sabotage) handbook titled *EcoDefense* — was a radical environmental activist traveling the world in his quest to deter "resource rapists." His work around the globe with uncompromising ecological groups such as Earth First! led him into a remarkably long and successful shadow-career of ecotage. During that time he racked up an impressive scorecard of victories. He scuttled three Norwegian whaling ships, destroyed no fewer than 63 pieces of deforestation equipment by slipping sugar and silt into their gas tanks and "spiked" vast tracts of Oregonian forestland to decrease their value to lumber companies.

Balmer's eruption took place only days after the explosion of the Galatea. A cadre of Brazilian loggers caught Balmer cutting hydraulic hoses on tractors in the Amazon rainforest. His captors, tired of dealing with the swarm of snot-nosed British and American idealists that seemed to be plaguing them that year, were preparing to invoke "rainforest justice" and make an example of Balmer by murdering him and leaving his body in the jungle for the scavengers. It didn't happen that way. Instead, Balmer's terror triggered his eruption, and enormous pits opened up and sucked his would-be murderers, their tractors, their camp and every trace of their passing, deep into the ground. Balmer himself passed out from the pain of the eruption headache. When he came to, the jungle was serene, and new growth was already apparent.

Balmer made his way back to Manaus and quietly returned to Manchester. He lied about the conditions surrounding his eruption to the Project Utopia representative. He was remarkably powerful even then and his charisma and comprehensive knowledge of environmental issues gained him more than a few admirers. Within days, he had an interview with Justin Laragione. Balmer gave the Director a taste of his dream: a world with no pollution, a world where humanity did not drive species into extinction, a world without clear-cuts, a world where the exploitation of nature was a thing of the past.... The idea appealed to Laragione not only on an idealistic level, but also from a public relations perspective. Balmer was made assistant director of Ecological Engineering the following week.

In the intervening years, Antaeus has been a spokesperson, a member of Team Tomorrow Auxiliary and, much to his chagrin, a media star. Recently he has done very little that does not concern terraforming (except read Euripides' *the Bacchae* over and over again). As his skin turns greener, his body undergoes more changes and he becomes more a force of nature than part of the human race, Antaeus has trouble remembering why these delicate little creatures are supposed to be so important. There are, after all, seven billion of the damned things running around, how valuable can they be?

Antaeus is one of the five most powerful novas alive. He has not revealed the full extent of his power to anyone, even his Utopia doctors, because he does not trust them entirely. Balmer is slow to anger, but the human race (in general) and Utopia (in particular) are doing a good job of it with their painfully obvious sterilization conspiracy, their petty squabbling, their unfounded self-importance, their relentless squandering of resources, their mindless coveting of possessions, their apparent inability to live in balance with the world.... He grows more distant from others as he broods and no one seems to notice. In their eyes, he's as much a part of Project Utopia as Director Laragione himself. They're taking him for granted just as they do the planet.

For the moment he bides his time. He reads literature, he contemplates art and he convinces himself that it's better to create than destroy.



and animal species would fit best in a terraformed area (and in what order to introduce them) and how to remove unwanted species from an environment with minimal ecosystem disruption.

—Species Preservation concentrates on preventing the extinction of flora and fauna ranging from the large (Siberian tigers) to the small (many insects and birds); its scientists have even begun advanced cloning experiments which, if successful, will reduce the risk of extinction precipitously, even for the most endangered species.

—Social Ecology examines how people interact with the land and the natural environment around them and how to maximize their use of the environment while minimizing the harm they do to it; SE's services have been chiefly responsible for making Ethiopia the breadbasket of Africa.

Chemistry and Pharmaceutical Sciences

Originally a subsection of Biological Sciences, but now a section in its own right, Chemistry & Pharmaceutical Sciences develops new drugs based on information gained by studying nova physiology, determines how standard drugs affect novas and their powers, creates new chemicals and devises applications for them. Although its work is not so well known as that of the larger and better-funded Triton Foundation, C&PS still enjoys an excellent reputation in the scientific com-

munity for the quality of its work. In fact, according to some, several of Triton's groundbreaking pharmaceutical discoveries derived from work initially done by Project Utopia chemists. Assistant Director Hee Yong Chen runs the C&PS section — on paper, at least. In practice he's far more interested in spending time in the lab. His administrative assistant Abigail Assefa, is the one who keeps things running smoothly and it is she who is really in charge. Anyone who wants anything goes to her and she routinely forges Dr. Chen's signature on the necessary paperwork.

Eruption Research Project

One of the smaller sections, though not in its importance, is the Eruption Research Project, a pet pursuit of Drs. Mazarin and Rashoud whose goal is to determine what event or series of events causes an individual to erupt and how that stressor determines the powers he or she manifests. The half-dozen or so scientists assigned to this project, led by Dr. Avril LaCoste, spend countless hours poring over reports of eruptions, studying statistical analyses of these reports and attempting to find some patterns in the blizzard of data. On those rare occasions someone captures an eruption on film, they study the footage intently. The big dream many of them share is to capture an entire eruption with their full suite of (so far virtually unused) highly sophisticated visual, audio and Magnetic Resonance Imaging recording equipment. If their attempts to use statistics and probability theory to determine where and when the next few eruptions will occur is a success, they just may get their wish — though the dangers of being near an erupting nova may make them wish they hadn't.

Nova Medicine

Novas present special challenges and opportunities for those in the field of medicine. On the one hand, treating humans made of rock, those with malleable bodies, or whose bodily energy fields ruin medical equipment can be difficult, at best — and that doesn't even take into consideration the broad-based immunity to most drugs displayed by the vast majority of novas. When you consider that it may be necessary to treat a nova *immediately*, the magnitude of the treatment challenge becomes apparent. On the other hand, nova powers and physiology can be significant medical assets. Chemistry & Pharmaceutical Sciences have developed many new drugs from nova biochemicals, for example. Some novas have used their abilities to perform incredibly precise microsurgery under the guidance of trained surgeons and, of course, the entire field of spinal injury repair derives directly from studies of nova recuperative powers. The Nova Medicine section holds the responsibility for meeting these challenges and taking advantage of the potential medical benefits

Dr. Kunari Sirakawa

While Dr. Chen is a gifted chemist, he's not the most brilliant scientist in his section. That honor belongs to Kunari Sirakawa, a child prodigy from Japan who earned his Ph.D in pharmaceuticals and chemistry at age 17. Now 25, he seems, in the eyes of many, to be well on his way to a distinguished scientific career — perhaps even one that will culminate in a Nobel Prize. Sirakawa's star shines brightly right now, but his well-concealed lack of scientific or medical ethics may very well eclipse it one day. To Sirakawa, the pursuit of scientific truth and knowledge is the ultimate end and the ends justify the means — any means. In his eagerness to develop newer, better drugs and chemicals, he's likely to bypass procedures, skimp on testing and leap to conclusions prematurely. His intelligence has kept him safe from the perils this sort of conduct poses, but sooner or later his flirtation with risk will attract the wrong kind of attention. It may have already happened. Proteus Director Ozaki has, on four separate occasions, indirectly supplied Sirakawa with the remains of unnamed novas for the purposes of node research. Sirakawa does not know who his benefactor is, but his addiction to science will ensure that should Ozaki need chemical analyses or the like, he knows where to go. Sirakawa may find himself a lead researcher in Bahrain, with all that that entails, before he knows it.

offered by novas. Every member of the section's "primary staff," over two dozen persons, is a licensed medical doctor with at least 10 years of experience. They come from backgrounds as diverse as pure laboratory research, to emergency room duty in south central Los Angeles, to combat medicine on the front lines of the Balkan and African conflicts. At one time or another, all of them have taken care of nova patients. Working with them is a host of less experienced doctors, physicians' assistants, nurses and medical lab technicians. Nova Medicine is split into three divisions: Research Division, Treatment Division and Field Division. The primary staff rotates between the three assignments on roughly an annual basis (with some allowance for a doctor's preferences, skills and strengths). Research Division conducts pure lab research involving both computer modeling and physical tests and samples. Much of this research is performed in conjunction with Chemistry & Pharmaceutical Sciences and the Triton Foundation. Treatment Division maintains several hospital- or clinic-like medical facilities for novas. Each of these facilities is equipped with specialized medical technology designed for use on novas (super-hard, super-sharp needles; hardened MRI scanners resistant to electromagnetic pulses and other energy fields; fire- and energy-resistant surgical gear). Field Division accompanies Team Tomorrow when it goes on missions to provide emergency medical care, should that prove necessary; its personnel wear highly specialized protective gear and carry medical emergency kits with equipment designed for use on novas. Due to the requirement of Field Division work, Nova Medicine doctors must meet certain physical and psychological standards to remain eligible for primary staff status; when they cannot meet those standards, they are typically transferred to "secondary staff" status, which does not require field-work. A former colonel in the medical branch of the United States Army and head of the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID), Lawrence Stadler, commands Nova Medicine. "Commands" is the correct term; he runs the entire section as if it were a branch of a military organization. Doctors and assistants are expected to dress appropriately, meet project completion deadlines and maintain a professional demeanor at all times. Although Stadler's methods usually get results, they have also been responsible for a certain amount of staff turnover that might otherwise have been avoided.

Recruitment

Recruiting new novas usually involves extensive scientific tests. For this reason, when Project Utopia was first established, the responsibility for recruiting was assigned to Science & Technology. Since then there have been several proposals to break Recruiting out into its own department, but the movers and shakers in S&T, who still believe in the justification for assigning Recruit-

ing to them in the first place, have always managed to defeat them. The support of Drs. Mazarin and Rashoud for their cause pretty much guarantees that Recruiting will remain an S&T function for the foreseeable future.

Leadership

Assistant Director Dieter Elendsohn, a Bavarian German, is in charge of Project Utopia's recruitment programs. As such he enjoys prestige and authority greater than that of most assistant directors, since everyone in the organization recognizes that recruiting new novas is vital to maintaining Project Utopia and moving its mission forward. Significant problems with, or successes in, Recruiting are often the subject of gossip throughout the Project (not to mention some Proteus missions).

Elendsohn himself comes from an academic background; he taught industrial psychology and served as the president of two major European universities prior to joining Project Utopia in 2003. Something of a free spirit, he rides a BMW motorcycle into work each day, never seems to brush his shaggy mane of hair, frequently ignores deadlines and scheduled meetings and interminably ogles attractive individuals of both sexes. Somehow, though, things in Recruiting flow along quite smoothly. Something about the man inspires others to work harder and better to please him. Despite his easy-going nature, Elendsohn does not get along well with Dr. Farah Rashoud (who considers him undisciplined) — a rather unfortunate state of affairs, given the importance of the "Rashoud facilities" in the recruitment procedure. Rashoud often opposes suggestions for new uses for the facilities just because they came from Elendsohn. Director Burghalter, a good friend of both, often has to intercede in the best interests of the Project. Other important functionaries within the Recruitment structure include: Ivar Pellavrainen, the Facilities Resources Manager (i.e., the man who makes sure each Rashoud lab is properly equipped and makes optimal use of its equipment); Bernice Mylonas, the Publicity Manager; Paul Bleeker, Intervention Team Coordinator (see below); and Zareck Cigielski, the Chief of Security, who is himself a nova.

Intervention Teams

The Recruitment section takes a two-pronged approach to recruiting — one prong proactive, the other reactive. The first prong consists of small squads of normal humans and nova humans known as Intervention Teams. The purpose of Intervention Teams is to get to an erupting nova as soon as possible, in order to soothe the individual (if necessary) and educate him or her about the options available to newly erupted novas. After erupting, novas are vulnerable for a period of time (usually lasting no more than 48 hours). During this time they are still subject to painful, often debilitating, headaches, suffer from disorientation and confusion and know little, if anything, about how to use their powers — any use is instinctual, not based on

experience. Those who would attack novas, or try to recruit them for dark purposes, often try to do so during this period. It is therefore important on many levels to get to a new nova as soon as possible and explain the realities of her new life. That's where Intervention Teams come in. When word comes in (whether through the media, Project Utopia's own detection equipment, or some other means), a Team rolls out to meet the new *novus*. The typical team travels in an advanced private jet (or under nova power) and includes about half a dozen people, at least one of whom is a PR specialist. Included in all teams are at one counselor and one medical doctor on temporary assignment from Nova Medicine. Their purpose is to introduce themselves to the new nova, in a completely non-confrontational way and offer whatever help is needed — even just someone to talk to who knows what she's going through. At the same time, they'll let her know about Project Utopia and what it has to offer. They won't fully recruit a new nova at that time, however; they'll give her at least 24-48 hours, if not more, to think about the prospects of joining the Utopians. During that time they maintain a covert watch on the nova for her own protection. If, after that time, the nova agrees to Utopia's offer, she'll be taken to a Rashoud facility for testing and evaluation. Intervention Teams' rate of success varies. In developed countries, such as those of

North America or Europe, it's usually about 40-45% — people living in those places are all too aware of the lucrative opportunities open to novas who enter the private sector and often prefer to pursue them instead of entering public service. In the ever-shrinking ranks of the underdeveloped nations, the rate is a little higher — about 60-65%. Paul Bleeker, a rather bland and humorless man in his mid-30s, holds the position of Intervention Team Coordinator. He makes sure that all the teams are properly staffed and equipped, that there are enough of them to cover the globe (within reason) and that they do their job efficiently and without exerting undue pressure on new novas. His coworkers respect his efficiency and competence, but few like him personally; they wipe their hands on their pants after receiving one of his moist handshakes.

Bleeker Prospects

Paul Bleeker's more than just a mildly annoying Utopia bureaucrat — he's a top-level plant for Project Proteus and a skilled undercover agent. His job puts him in the perfect position to ferret out appropriate novas for Proteus's plans. When he deems it appropriate, he keeps word of the eruption of a new nova secret, sending in Proteus "intervention squads" instead of the standard Intervention Team. Many Proteus higher-ups, including Director Thetis, regard Bleeker as something of a "favorite". Unless he makes a serious blunder, he is likely to go far in the cabal.



The Rashoud Labs

The more “reactive” part of Project Utopia’s recruitment apparatus is the Rashoud facilities network. The brainchild of Dr. Farah Rashoud, the labs are designed to test novas and help them, especially the new ones, learn about their powers — how they work, how powerful they are, what can be done with them.

Most countries have at least one Rashoud lab and many have more than one. The typical lab resembles, at least up front, a professional office more than a medical facility. However, behind the well-decorated lobbies are extensive laboratories, testing chambers and even dormitory facilities for novas who choose to stay on-site (most do).

Prominent Rashoud Labs

The largest and best-equipped Rashoud facilities are listed below. Labs in other places are usually smaller and not as well equipped; they typically refer difficult cases to the nearest lab able to handle them. North America: New York, Chicago, Phoenix, San Francisco, Miami, Ottawa, Vancouver, Mexico City South/Central America: Quito, Sao Paulo, Bogota, Managua Europe: London, Paris, Rome, Zurich, Moscow, Kiev Africa: Addis Ababa, Lagos, Capetown Asia: Calcutta, Bombay, Jakarta, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Manila Australia/Oceania: Sydney

The popular conception of the Rashoud facilities, despite several N! documentaries taking a look at them from the inside, is a comic-book like testing facility containing rooms where new novas and specially programmed robots duke it out to test the nova’s powers. In truth, though, no Rashoud lab is equipped for that sort of combat testing. However, most have at least one “testing chamber,” similar to an indoor shooting range, where novas can exert their new powers to the fullest if necessary for some test. The testing chambers’ walls are reinforced with thick layers of special armor developed by Materials Engineering, making it difficult for a fledgling nova to do significant damage to them. The testing chambers normally aren’t used when a nova first comes to a Rashoud facility. The labs’ main purpose is really medical and psychological testing and counseling, not power evaluation. Most newly erupted novas who show up on a Rashoud lab’s door are administered doses of moxinoquantamine or adrenocilin to make it easier for them to control their powers (many new novas cause significant damage before they learn to control their powers fully) and to lessen the pain caused by node headaches and other bodily transformations.

A “Facility Manager” runs each Rashoud lab; these managers, who always have M.D. degrees, are hand picked by and answer directly to, Dr. Farah Rashoud. In



The Mickey

Moxinoquantamine and adrenocilin aren't the only thing that Rashoud lab "customers" get when they check in. Both drugs are laced with subtle, yet effective, contraceptive drugs developed by Proteus agents from the Nova Medicine section. These contraceptives sterilize novas with a single dose by attaching markers to their gametes that cause the nova's immune system to misidentify these cells as pathogens and destroy them. This very effectively prevents the nova from ever siring children or becoming pregnant. Proteus does not have an antidote. This technique is the cornerstone in Proteus's plan to control the nova population.

The Nova Evaluation Center

Located in the nation of Bahrain, the euphemistically-named Nova Evaluation Center is, in effect, the Rashoud facility to end all Rashoud facilities — but with a twist. Whereas most of the work done by the normal Rashoud facilities is public knowledge, almost nothing that goes on at the Bahrain facility fits that description. Bahrain is, among other things, a testing and evaluation center for novas having exceptional difficulty controlling their powers, a prison, and a research lab for the study of Taint. Project Utopia has discovered that overuse of some nova powers can cause novas to develop temporary personality problems that make it difficult for them to control their own behavior. Some novas even develop such problems while undergoing eruption or shortly thereafter; this seems particularly common with novas whose powers cause significant physical alterations to their bodies. Novas experiencing these difficulties can "check in" to the Bahrain facility for special intensive care and programs designed to help them overcome their problems. In some cases Project Utopia will issue an invitation to a nova to attend counseling at the facility — a sort of "intervention" or "wake-up call" designed to help the nova come to grips with his problem and take the first steps towards dealing with it. Because its role as a hospital and treatment center makes it particularly vulnerable to attack by Teragen agents and other groups opposed to Utopia's aims and goals, the Bahrain facility is heavily guarded by a cadre of powerful novas at all times. The interior of the facility is off limits to all media and most civilians and many of the laboratories and diagnostic facilities are located deep underground to provide extra security against Teragen attack. Unfortunately, this need for security has caused many irresponsible members of the world media and private citizens who maintain Utopia-oriented OpSites to leap to unfounded conclusions about the "torture chambers" and "Nazi laboratories" at Bahrain. Utopia itself has a strict non-acknowledgement/non-denial policy with regard to the existence of the Bahrain facility.

fact, Dr. Rashoud often shows up at the labs unannounced to view the newest novas as they try out their powers or to bring the Manager information about some new procedure she wants to try out. The Managers tend to be extremely loyal to Rashoud and pass her much "unofficial" information along with the official reports that they are required to file with her on a weekly basis.

Hardtech

Materials Engineering

In a world where super-powered humans can create objects out of thin air, it stands to reason that they may not always create things previously known to science. Anibál Buendia proved this with his eufiber products. The Materials Engineering section was set up to take advantage of that fact. Its goal is to create better, more useful, more environmentally friendly and non-toxic materials for use in industrial and consumer products. The materials it invents are then marketed by some of Project Utopia's subsidiary corporations (see below). It occurred to the Board of Directors that novas could create many other substances that would significantly improve life on planet Earth — Utopia's priority goal — while still presenting, in the words of the main memorandum on the subject, "measurable commercial potential." They proved to be brilliant prognosticators; today the ME section is one of Project Utopia's primary sources of revenue. Among the many materials the ME section has developed are the following:

- Valamid fibers, a substance with ten times the strength and resilience of Kevlar™. Marketed under the brand name QuanTech, valamid has led to the creation of more comfortable and more protective bulletproof vests for law enforcement personnel, protective clothing for hobbyists like rock-climbers and motorcyclists and packing materials better able to resist the strain of being sent through the mail or thrown into the back of a truck.

- Ultralight ceramics with the low density of advanced plastics but the resiliency of the toughest titanium steel, used to manufacture key components of the hypercombustion engine.

- Radiation-proof shielding materials similar to the ones created for the SWDF that protect humans from the dangerous side effects of nuclear reactor cores and similar equipment. Several of these materials have been used to develop new, lightweight shielding for spacecraft.

- Vella, a cheap artificial paper substitute virtually indistinguishable from paper made from wood-pulp.

- The world's first 100% odor-free cat litter.

Riding herd on the scientists and novas in Materials Engineering is Assistant Director Dr. Jasmine deLois. Possessing graduate degrees from MIT and Rensselaer Polytechnic, Dr. deLois believes passionately in the aims and goals of Project Utopia and has even gone so far as to have a pair of platinum earrings made with the Project's

insignia engraved on them. She genuinely enjoys going into work every day and trying to come up with some new material or product to revolutionize human life.

Space Sciences

Because the Earth itself needed so much work, the concept of using novas to expand and accelerate Earth's exploration of outer space initially did not occur to many people — and even when it did occur, it rarely caught the public's attention. That changed in 2003, when the members of Team Tomorrow rescued the space shuttle *Discovery* and saved the lives of its crew. After seeing how easily certain novas could exist and maneuver in space, authorities realized that utilizing novas in the exploration of near space could save immense amounts of time and money. Almost overnight, the idea of “novas in space” caught fire in the public imagination. Shortly after the *Discovery* incident, Project Utopia established a Space Sciences section under its Science & Technology department. The section's announced goals were “to expand the frontiers of space and facilitate human understanding of the heavens.” Cynical reporters dubbed the project “Operation STAR TREK.” They had to eat those words in 2004, when novas under the direction of Project Utopia, NASA and the European Space Agency built the Kepler Multistage Orbital Telescope and assembled it in space, all in the less than a month. A vast improvement over the Hubble space telescope, the “Kepler array,” as it came to be popularly known, gave humanity an even larger, clearer window on the universe. Startling discoveries, including new planets, solar systems and galaxies, followed almost immediately. In 2005, those same three organizations began construction of the Earth Orbital Habitat Station (EOHS), the world's first permanently manned space station. Original plans for a cooperatively built space station conceived in the 1970s had collapsed in the wake of the 1999 worldwide depression and the disintegration of Russia. The booming world economy, not to mention the advances in science and technology since that time, once again made such a project feasible and the world moved forward on it. Construction of EOHS is still ongoing — not even the Aeon Society and Project Utopia can afford to build a facility like that quickly — but is scheduled for completion in 2009. The first “crew” to inhabit it will number approximately two dozen. In 2007, humanity, in the person of nova astronaut Janice Karagian, returned to the moon — with no artificial means of life support. Although technically an employee of NASA, Karagian freely acknowledged the crucial support and assistance that Project Utopia's Space Sciences section provided her in the mission. Team Tomorrow has since made several expeditions to the Moon; nowadays it seems almost commonplace at times. NASA, ESA and Project Utopia are currently planning to send Karagian and several other nova astronauts on a mission to Mars in 2010.

With the emergence of novas into the space race, governments no longer controlled who left the planet,

who could put up satellites and who visited the moon.

One offbeat nova hobbyists club called the Daedalus League (not affiliated in any way with Project Utopia) dedicated itself to going out into space farther and faster than any government-sponsored individual. The media scoffed at these “Quantum optimists” until the nova Cyrus Katrak held a press conference at which he presented the editor of the *New York Times* with soil samples from several of the Jovian moons. The media became believers and Utopia, in a state approaching panic, aggressively renewed its efforts in space.

By sheer luck, Project Utopia already had most of the space-capable novas known to the world and it instantly became the great power in space. Governments often relied on Utopia's novas to place satellites or other payloads into orbit. This was immensely lucrative for Utopia, as they were able to charge slightly less to place a satellite than it would cost a government to conduct a full space launch. It was another coup for Utopia. The man in charge of Utopia's space projects, Dr. Pesach Silbermann, has been involved in the exploration of space since the 1970s, when as a young man he built model rockets in his backyard. After obtaining advanced degrees at the University of Chicago and MIT, he worked with NASA and the ESA before he was hired to head Space Sciences. Seemingly carefree and optimistic at all times, he is a diligent worker and a perfectionist who expects everyone on his staff to live up to the high standards he sets for them. He keeps a Martian globe on his desk and often gazes longingly at it, looking forward to the day when the red planet first sports human footprints.

Technological Regulation

Pursuant to powers granted it by the United Nations, Project Utopia is allowed to monitor and regulate technological advancement and if necessary to confiscate technological items deemed too dangerous for human use at present. Since most technological advancement these days derives from the so-called “nova boom,” delegating this power to Project Utopia seemed only logical. When nova engineers or inventors produce gadgets (or entirely new technologies, for that matter), those items must be declared to Project Utopia and given over for rigorous testing and evaluation by S&T before being used. If that item is considered dangerous, directly or indirectly, then it is confiscated. Items are declared directly dangerous if they have the potential to do lasting harm to individuals, property, or the environment. Items are declared indirectly dangerous if they could disrupt the global balance of power or endanger the greater public if mass-produced. Project Utopia formed a Technological Regulation (or “TecReg”) section of S&T to which it in turn delegated this duty. Among many segments of Earth society, including most R&D departments and Mega-Intelligent novas, this is the

least popular of Project Utopia's tasks. Hated might be a more appropriate term. Corporations, particularly those in free trade nations such as the United States, bitterly protested the imposition of any such controls over their "right to create," and continue to complain about it vociferously. The fact that Project Utopia itself owns subsidiaries that can produce technological items only heightens their anger; according to some, the United Nations has given Utopia a "monopoly to steal from us, stockpile our best technology and then adapt it and sell it themselves." More than one terrorist incident has been traced to anger over Technological Regulation's duties and an extensive worldwide black market in new tech has sprung up. A nonsense information systems designer from Denmark named Gregor van der Groot was given the unpleasant job of riding herd on the world's technologists. While his competence is unquestioned and his employees adore him, his results have been mixed. Extensive new international technology laws have been enacted and "technology monitoring centers" established in every major nation, but he's had little luck stopping the technological black market from flourishing. All around the world, in tiny, ill-equipped labs with paint-blackened windows, brilliant scientists struggle in obscurity, hoping to invent something that will make them rich, Utopia's laws be damned. And one of them, somewhere, is building the next São Paulo bomb.

Social Sciences

Not every human problem can be solved with a new form of technology, applications of the latest scientific theories or a helping hand from a nova. Some, (including, among others, poverty, hunger, crime and mental illness) require a longer-term, more sophisticated approach. Tackling those problems is what the Social Sciences Department was created to do. Social Science employees include economists, agricultural specialists, sociologists, criminologists, anthropologists, historians and other experts on the problems facing human society. In an effort to transform human society the same way that Science & Technology transformed the Ethiopian highlands, they study those problems and devise solutions. Of course, there's no quick and easy solution, so they must continually monitor their programs, making tiny adjustments to take into account new variables that have arisen or the changing dimensions of the problem being addressed. Some of Social Science's major programs and projects include:

— the Poverty Eradication Project: This program's goal is to raise the standard of living for all persons on Earth to certain predefined minima and then to stabilize world economies as much as possible to make sure that standard of living continues to have the same effect. The scientists working on Poverty Eradication are fully aware that, without some significant advancement in technology, they cannot make seven billion people equally prosperous or materially comfortable, but they are confident that they can meet their goal of ensuring that everyone's

minimum needs are met.

— the Crime Prevention Project: This equally ambitious program studies the root causes of crime — human nature, poverty, mental illness and others — and devises ways to address or correct them in limited environments, such as a single city, or even within the setting of just one neighborhood of a city. It then studies the effect and records the end results of the experiment, hoping to find a method or series of methods that can, in conjunction with other Social Sciences programs, eventually greatly reduce the number of crimes committed on the planet, or even bring crime to a halt altogether.

— WHERE, World Hunger Eradicated Everywhere: This part of Social Sciences, the recipient of many of the gifts that come into the organization through the Donations section, aims to reduce or eliminate hunger. It works closely with Poverty Eradication and the Environmental Services branch of Science & Technology to make sure that every individual on the planet consumes a minimum daily requirement of nutritious food. Because of its well-developed logistical infrastructure for distributing gifts of food, it often works with Team Tomorrow to assist with relief distribution following disasters.

— the Population Management Center: Social Sciences recognizes that many of the world's problems — environmental overexploitation, poverty, pollution, hunger, overcrowding and the lesser problems they bring with them — are caused, at least in part, by overpopulation. While the Earth is, at least theoretically, capable of supporting more people than it has, too many of them want to be in the same places and this places enormous stress on the planet. By developing new methods of parental planning, population management, urban design and the like, the Population Management Center hopes to solve many of these problems, or at least put people in a position to solve them for themselves.

The Director of Social Sciences, Robin Woodlawn, a Universal Unitarian minister, is just the sort of deeply compassionate and spiritual woman one would expect to find heading up this sort of department. The fact that she holds doctoral degrees in both sociology and theology and has spent decades overseeing various United Nations charity organizations only makes her the more qualified for the position. She exudes a sense of serenity and organization; even deeply distraught people seem to feel better just by being in her presence. In her spare time, what little of it there is, she paints, kick-boxes, skis, and she has recently begun writing a history of the Unitarians.

Field Offices

Because they have projects underway in many different cities, provinces and nations around the world, the scientists of Social Sciences often spend a lot of time away from the department's headquarters in Addis Ababa. To facilitate their work, the department has established a series of "Field Offices" around the world. Each Field Office contains office space and resources

for up to a dozen researchers and many have specialized scientific equipment for use in particular projects. Some of the most important Field Offices can be found in Calcutta, New York City, Kabul, Lagos, Nairobi, Vladivostok, Rangoon and Manila.

Business Interests and Subsidiary Operations

Saving the world costs a lot of money. No organization, not even Project Utopia, can fund peacekeeping forces, terraform deserts, pay for coincidental damage caused by novas using their powers to combat crime, clean up the environment, maintain a small standing army, conduct thousands of studies and research experiments, ad infinitum, on a shoestring budget. Utopia needs an enormous stream of income to keep things operating smoothly and accomplish its goals within a reasonable timeframe. While Project Utopia can draw on the enormous coffers of the Aeon Society for some of its funding, as a private non-profit corporation it's still expected to cover its own expenses as much as possible. Fortunately, its access to that most precious of commodities — novas and information relating to or derived from the study of them — provides it with a potential source of vast income. It has exploited this resource to the fullest; in many years, despite its enormous expenditures, it has actually managed to return money to the Aeon Society — no mean feat when your expense budget includes

Workin' For A Livin'

According to NSI records, the following are the four most common types of jobs that its clients hire novas to perform:

1. Personal appearances/acting/spokesmodeling
2. Bodyguard/security
3. Construction/demolition
4. Cargo transport

items like, "selenological samples container" and "reinforced nova containment capsules." Project Utopia's profits derive not from its own operations, but from those of the dozens of businesses it owns, in whole or in part, as subsidiaries. Its holdings range from small, three-man research and consultations firms located in Indonesia, to enormous multinational corporations. Although the public generally remains unaware of the fact, Project Utopia is actually one of the world's economic superpowers, a corporation on a par with IBM, Royal Dutch Shell, ViaSoft, or the like. In order to maintain its image as a charitable organization devoted to the most noble of goals, Project Utopia prefers to downplay its business and financial interests as much as possible.

Subsidiaries

The following represent some of Project Utopia's most prominent and profitable subsidiary properties. Most of them do not advertise the fact that Utopia owns them (whether in whole or in part), though with some (such as Nova Services International, Inc.), the relationship is obvious.

QuanTech Corporation

Initially created to manufacture and market products using Utopia's valamid fibers — primarily bullet-proof vests and related items — QuanTech has since expanded into the entire field of law enforcement and security equipment. Based in St. Louis, Missouri, QuanTech manufactures burglar alarms, police uniforms, handcuffs, police car light bars and sirens and hundreds of other goods. However, it neither manufactures nor sells firearms or firearms accessories other than belts and holsters.

A subsidiary of QuanTech, QuantaLume Lighting, manufactures and installs indoor and outdoor lighting systems related to security. Its products, along with those of QuanTech Corporation, grace the Project Utopia headquarters in Addis Ababa and the bases of each of the Teams Tomorrow.

Nova Services International, Inc.

This corporation, a sort of "talent agency" for Project Utopia's novas, brokers their services to private employers worldwide for work on various projects and products. This might include anything from helping to construct a building, to appearing in a movie or television show, to transporting cargo, to finding someone's lost cat. Jennifer Landers, for example, was working through Nova Services International while assisting Novelty Consulting when she was murdered in Calcutta. All Project Utopia novas must agree, as part of their job package with Utopia, to work for Nova Services International (at least for the first three years of their association with Utopia; after that they can choose whether or not to keep working for NSI). They receive separate pay for such work. Typically NSI negotiates a rate of pay; the employer pays NSI a percentage of that pay (10% is standard) and pays the negotiated salary to the nova directly. Even the weakest nova's services do not come cheap and hiring someone like Antaeus or Caestus Pax would require a fortune. However, NSI does take into account a prospective client's need and ability to pay; it is, after all, a subsidiary of a charity organization that tries to maintain a positive public image for helping humanity. Thus, if a small child desperately wanted to hire, say, a nova with sensory powers to find her lost kitten, NSI would, if scheduling allowed, do the job for free, or at most charge her a token sum so that she would learn how to handle money. Most novas take their service for NSI in stride and look on it not only as the chance to earn more money, but as a way to generate good publicity (both for themselves and for Utopia as a whole). How-

ever, some bitterly resent this “enforced servitude,” and their anger over being made to “perform tricks for money” has caused more than a few of them to seriously consider the message of the Null Manifesto regarding novas’ freedom from the laws of humans. For most of them, though, the limited duration of the service and the high rate of pay usually manage to assuage any bruised egos.

Merced Pharmaceutical

Although Project Utopia often works closely with the pharmaceutical giant the Triton Foundation, it also owns some drug manufacturing companies of its own. Many of these concentrate on more “everyday” products rather than the groundbreaking therapies that seem to flow out of Triton’s labs every month. The largest of these firms is Merced Pharmaceutical, based in London but with significant offices in Badenheim, Atlanta, Mexico City and Madrid. Merced produces a wide variety of standard pharmaceutical items, such as cough medicines, analgesics and the like. However, it’s best known in the minds of many people for its work in the contraceptive field. For example, its Sekura brand of condoms are rated among the most effective and most comfortable in the world. In 2005, Merced scientists unveiled a new contraceptive device called Shield. Implanted just under the skin of a man’s outer thigh, it time-releases contraceptive drugs that sterilize sperm, but do not otherwise affect the body in any way. Years of testing, followed by years of field use, have revealed no side effects or other problems with using Shield, which lasts for approximately

10 years. Merced sells Shield in the developed world, but in Third World nations and other areas where population control remains a significant problem, Utopia’s Population Management Center runs clinics where it implants Shield in men completely free of charge.

Novation Toys, Games & Comics

First begun in 2001, Novation is one of Utopia’s greatest revenue providers. While Utopia didn’t initially realize just how popular novas would be (their short-sightedness lost them the OpNet niche to N! and nearly lost the action figure market to DeVries), they did catch on shortly thereafter, launching Novation TG&C to capitalize on the world’s (especially children’s) love affair with novas.

Novation produces a full range of books, comic books, action figures, video games, cartoons, lunch boxes and interactive DVD — as well as clothing and fashion accessories — all featuring various Team Tomorrow and Project Utopia novas.

Since the Slider scandal, all of Novation’s products have been overseen by Public Relations Assistant Director Morganna Wolf, who manages (some say micromanages) public perceptions of Utopia through Novation’s products. Wolf scrutinizes every panel of every comic book, every second of every cartoon and every piece of clothing produced by Novation. If she doesn’t feel that Project Utopia is represented sympathetically enough in that product, it is changed. Furthermore, Wolf



is zealous (some say rabid) in bringing trademark infringement lawsuits against companies that use the images of Project Utopia novas without permission.

Much to her chagrin, it was recently brought to her attention that not one but three of Novation's best selling action figures are non-Utopian novas. It just makes the situation worse that the likenesses of Divis Mal and Geryon are officially licensed to Pandemonium Playthings, a toy and media company managed by the woman known as "Narcosis," a known Teragen sympathizer. Wolf is doing what she can at the moment to avoid a lawsuit, but lawyers are already lining up to represent the plaintiffs and the prognosis is not good. Meanwhile, the little companies that Novation has browbeaten for the last five years are gleefully awaiting Novation's death by litigation...

Amalgamated Marine Mining, Inc.

Few people realize that the ocean holds vast mineral wealth. Dissolved in its waters are gold, platinum, uranium and a thousand other valuable substances, just waiting for someone to find a way to extract them profitably. That's what Amalgamated Marine Mining was established to do. While its operations have not yet reached the stage of true profitability, AmalMar (as it's commonly known) has demonstrated that its experimental techniques are capable of removing the minerals from seawater without causing harm to the environment or costing more than they bring in. AmalMar has achieved greater success in mining the manganese nodules on the floor of the Pacific Ocean. For years this extensive supply of manganese has caused disputes in the United Nations regarding its ownership and exploitation. Finally, acting on a proposal from AmalMar and Project Utopia, the UN allowed AmalMar to go ahead with a mining project, provided that a substantial percentage of the profits therefrom were donated to world charities other than Project Utopia.

Iridium Information Systems

Known for its iridescent "quill" logo, which has begun to appear on an increasingly large percentage of the

world's information systems, IIS manufactures computers of various sorts. While it lacks the size and clout of companies IBM or Sun Microsystems, Iridium has developed a solid reputation for the quality and capabilities of its products. To date Iridium has restricted itself to manufacturing larger, business-oriented systems, rather than personal PCs. However, it is eyeing the personal PC market and may soon decide to take a plunge into that end of the business. It has some ideas for laptops and personal digital assistants that it hopes will revolutionize the field.

Iridium supplies many of the information systems used by Project Utopia, Team Tomorrow, the Aeon Society and the United Nations. Since that makes it a tempting target for terrorists (Teragen or otherwise) and criminals, its Tempe, Arizona corporate and manufacturing facilities are heavily guarded by private security personnel, including a couple of very well paid and very powerful novas.

Willoughby Financial Associates, P.A.

Located in the heart of Wall Street, Willoughby Financial is one of the giants of the world financial market. It provides investment services for people who wish to buy stock, invest in mutual funds and the like. Its funds, which often own substantial amounts of stock in other Utopia subsidiaries, consistently do well over the long term and have proven a popular vehicle for many small to medium investors. Willoughby Financial also provides several related services for large investors, such as insurance companies, governments and other corporations. Willoughby was recently rocked by scandal, when it was discovered that Herbert Burns, its Chief Operations Officer, had been engaging in illegal investment transactions in violation of United States and international laws. Burns fled New York one step ahead of the law and has not been seen or heard from since. Utopia officials, concerned that his knowledge of Willoughby's and Utopia's financial practices might prove attractive to the Teragen (or other enemies of Utopia), have recently tasked Team Tomorrow with the job of tracking him down and bringing him back to the United States for trial.

CHAPTER 3: TEAM TOMORROW



The Team Tomorrow Code of Honor is the code of ethics subscribed to by all team members. Every member must know the Code cold and be able to recite it at any time or place and explain what it means. Generally, after teaching it to class after class of school children, most Team Tomorrow members find that it's not difficult.

Thinking only of courtesy, kindness and respect for others, I will consistently endeavor to conduct myself as honorably and compassionately as possible, most especially when circumstances make it difficult to do so.

Once a valid objective has been identified, I shall do everything within my power to achieve that objective through all honorable means, direct or indirect. I acknowledge that as a member of Team Tomorrow, the world expects me to move farther faster, fight harder and behave more nobly than any other nova.

My words and deeds have ramifications on others beyond what I perceive and I shall strive to make sure that the lives of those I encounter are made better and more dignified by all I do. I will always endeavor to uphold the prestige, honor and high *esprit de corps* of Team Tomorrow.

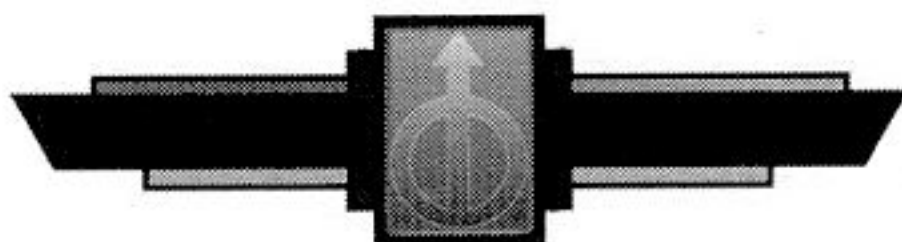
Only the weak and ignorant waste their potential by indulging in the destructive and fleeting diversions of drug and alcohol abuse, and I shall do my nova best to avoid all such dangers and encourage others to be strong enough to do likewise.

Reasily will I help those in need of my assistance; my abilities impart upon me greater responsibilities than others bear, and I will render assistance with graciousness and good cheer, because only the truly strong can be gentle.

Recognizing that violence is the last resort of a limited mind, I shall always seek peaceful alternatives to combat; failing that, I shall resolve combat in as quick and honorable a way as possible for the sake of all those in the vicinity.

Only through cooperation, determination, hard work and skill can I make the world a better place, for there is no accomplishment in sloth, no joy in isolation and no honor in apathy. I have been given the power to change the world for the better and so I shall.

When confronted with danger or any type of challenge, I can be counted on to be physically, mentally and emotionally prepared. I will do my very best and then some in order to prevail, because I am a hero, a role model and a member of Team Tomorrow.



History

Project Utopia started 1999 with a bang. In the latter months of 1998, the project's director, Justin J. Laragione, hinted in several press releases that "something big" was coming. What he may not have realized initially was just how big it would turn out to be.

On New Year's Day, 1999, after all the parades were finished and people were supposed to be watching bowl games on television, Project Utopia held a press conference — which, naturally, all the networks interrupted their previously scheduled programming to cover. In what can only be described as a media spectacle, attended by VIPs ranging from Secretary General Annan, to Steven Spielberg, to former President Jimmy Carter, to Yevgeni Primakov, to Tom Cruise, Director Laragione unveiled Project Utopia's first major step on the road to fulfilling its motto: *Team Tomorrow*, a group of novas from around the world. The project had organized them into a team, complete with its own separate branch of the project's headquarters in New York as its "base." The first members of Team Tomorrow were brought out on a stage where they recited the Team Tomorrow Code of Honor in unison in front of the cameras. The Team's stated

purpose, according to the Director, was "to implement Project Utopia's goals of a better future." Whatever that entailed — fighting crime and terrorism, preventing disasters (or assisting with disaster relief), relieving famines and other environmental problems — Team Tomorrow would do. The Team's initial (and relatively short-lived) roster included seven members:

- Caestus Pax (the team's leader)
- Allison "Psyche" Pfaltzgraff, the leather-clad heiress from Chicago capable of launching devastating psychic assaults on opponents.
- Anthony "Lightning" Chang of Toronto
- Griffin Armstrong, a Canadian possessing an uncanny mastery of gravity as well as amazing strength and extremely tough and resilient skin.
- Ewen Banks, a popular young Australian known colloquially as "the Apollo Kid" due to his advanced reasoning capabilities, his powers of flight and fire manipulation — as well as his neo-classical fashion choices.
- Pratima Basham, an Indian woman with the ability to control water and meteorological phenomena..
- Ricardo Montoya-Bernal, the green-skinned



CHAPTER 3: TEAM TOMORROW

strongman and acrobat from Belize, whose insistence on wearing his mask is credited, in part, with building up the "mask" traditions common among South and Central American novas.

As well as three members in training:

— Hiram "Slag" Goldberg, the immensely charismatic New York nova capable of manipulating flames and molten metal.

— Gvuthbjörg Danielsdottir, the lovely, talented, invulnerable and telekinetic Icelandic powerhouse also known as "The Ragnarockette."

— Christoph Yannik, the self-proclaimed "shadow artist" from Austria.

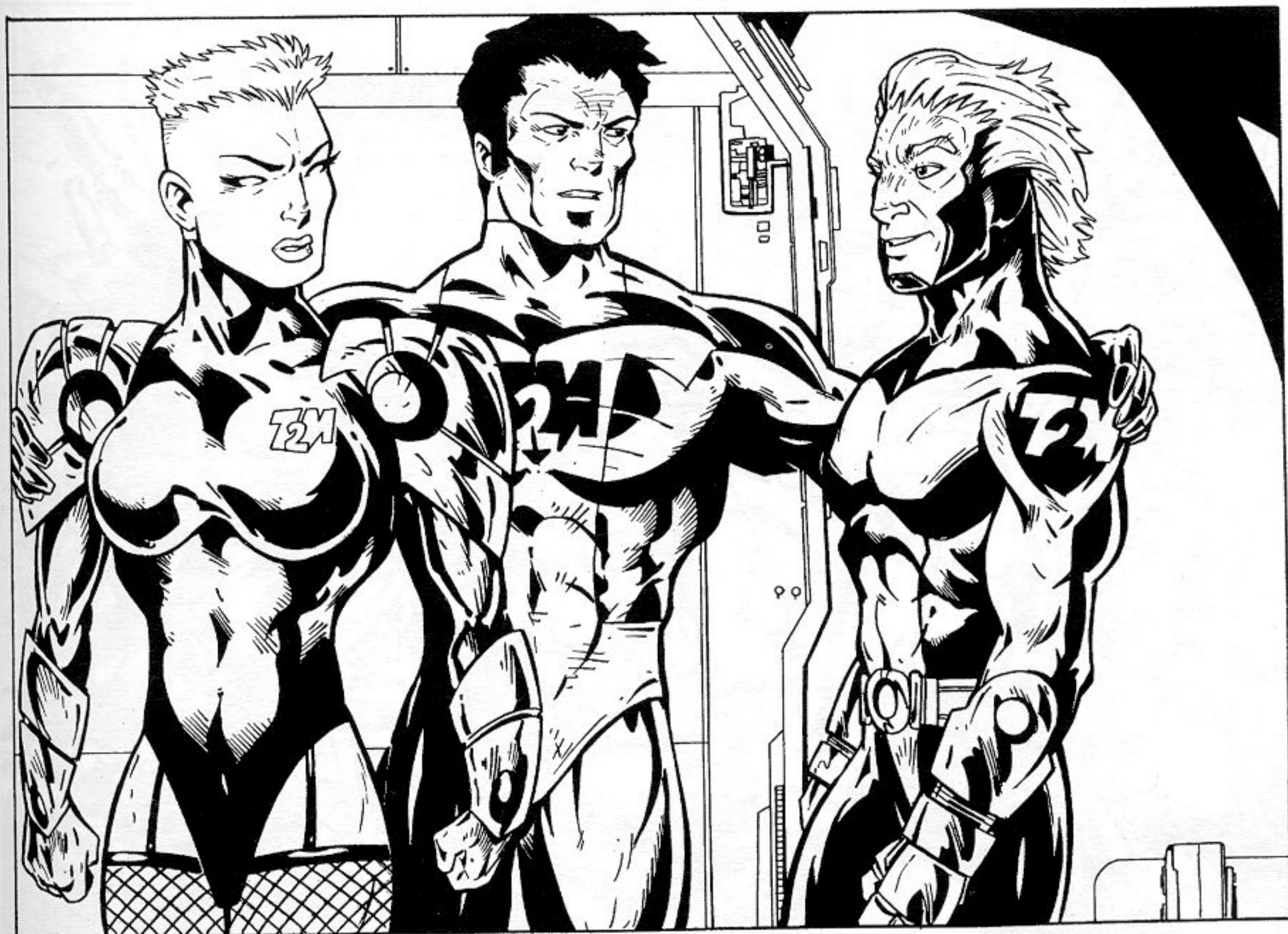
After the director finished speaking, Caestus Pax took the podium and gave a stirring speech about all novas being responsible for using their quantum abilities for the greater good. The many cynics in the audience dismissed it as a big publicity stunt, but they weren't able to remain dubious for very long.

The Al-Burhan Raid

Team Tomorrow got to work immediately to show the world what it could do. Two days later, with Caestus Pax in

the lead, the team smashed its way into the headquarters of the Islamic Dawn, a terrorist group based in Al-Burhan, Iran, known for its usually bloody attacks on Israeli and American targets. Although armed with Russian assault rifles, grenades and shoulder-launched SAMs, the terrorists and their leader, Mahir bin Ammar, were no match for the devastating Caestus Pax, no less his six teammates. Armstrong and Pfaltzgraff took out the guards and the surrounding missile launchers. Banks placed a wall of fire between the terrorists and their arsenal while Montoya-Bernal snatched weapons from the terrorists' hands before they could use them. Basham slammed the terrorists against the walls with enormous waves of water that appeared seemingly out of nowhere. Caestus Pax and Lightning blasted the terrorists into unconsciousness with bolts of raw energy. The compound was secured within three minutes with no member of Team Tomorrow suffering so much as a scratch.

While the Iranian government watched in stunned silence, the United Nations directed Team Tomorrow to turn the captured terrorists over to UN authorities to be tried for a number of bombings, murders and related charges. Inside of a year, all members of the Islamic Dawn were in an Ameri-



can federal prison awaiting trial. It was a stunning triumph for the young nova team.

Rashoud Facilities

A week after announcing its existence, Team Tomorrow held another press conference: It was looking for recruits. It made this announcement at the new Project Utopia Satellite Laboratory facility in midtown Manhattan — an office/lab located not far from the site of the Fireman's eruption and established to recruit new novas into Project Utopia. The leaders of the project had reasoned that lack of access to a full Utopia facility might dissuade new novas from signing up. To counteract this problem, they decided to establish a series of recruiting offices/testing laboratories in major cities around the world, starting in New York. They'd be places where newly erupted novas could explore and learn about their powers without fear of harming anyone or damaging anything valuable. The satellite labs quickly became commonly known as "Rashoud facilities," since Dr. Rashoud was the head of the project charged with establishing them. Within just a few years, Project Utopia would have dozens more.

From *The Equatorial Wars: Novas In Peace and Conflict*, by Gertrude Furgeson, Ph.D.

We read so much about what Project Utopia's doing and the exploits of Team Tomorrow, that we sometimes forget that many — perhaps most — novas don't share their ideals. Many of these non-Utopian novas seem content to use their powers to cash in by working as pitchmen for any corporation willing to shell out the money to hire them. But some take a darker path and become quantum-powered mercenaries — "elites," as they're popularly known. These elites earn enormous amounts of money working for any two-bit dictator who can hire them. For many nations, it's cheaper to hire a small force of elites than to train and equip companies of soldiers and equally effective in most instances.



CHAPTER 3: TEAM TOMORROW



The conflicts, somewhat inaccurately called the Equatorial Wars, began as typical Western/Central African brush wars between various political and tribal groups jockeying for power. In the Sudan, northern Muslims and southern Christians fought for control of the country; farther west, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and the nations lining the southern coast of the African bulge all plunged into various conflicts of their own.

Ordinarily these wars would displace civilians and, perhaps, lead to shifts of power in some of the countries, with relatively little loss of life compared to, say, conflicts in the Balkans or India. This time it was different. One of the combatants in Nigeria, General Akinlawon Ogolongwe, hired an elite known only as Totentanz to help his forces. Within ten days, he had defeated two of his rivals soundly and was well on his way to taking over the entire country, with some of his smaller neighbors likely to fall under his thumb thereafter.

It didn't take long before every other military leader in the region had hired an elite soldier or three of his own (which was all any one of them could afford). Eventually the use of normal human troops became secondary; what really mattered was how many novas a given leader could field and of

what level of power. In the course of their incomprehensibly violent battles, the elites razed entire towns, collapsed bridges, killed one another in unprecedented numbers and sometimes reshaped the very terrain itself. That entire stretch of sub-Saharan Africa was turned into one huge scar on the face of Africa. Hundreds of innocent civilians were killed in the "crossfire." Larger countries or factions, able to afford more (or more powerful) elites swallowed up smaller countries and rivals.

The disturbing sight of nova battling nova and the resulting death and destruction made it into homes on the evening news. The ensuing public outrage compelled Team Tomorrow to get involved. Both T2M Americas and T2M Europe, acting at the behest of the United Nations, entered the fighting in an attempt to bring peace to the land, but the elites were paid too well to give up without a fight. It was to be Team Tomorrow's first and only decisive defeat. The combined efforts of several war-hardened elites, most working for the slick and ethically questionable DeVries agency, were more than a match for Team Tomorrow. These were paranormal soldiers accustomed to playing rough on a scale that made the picture-perfect public relations heroes of T2M look like rookies, posers and



CHAPTER 3: TEAM TOMORROW

grandstanders. When Totentanz killed Slag and Pursuer seriously wounded Pele, the whole operation collapsed like a burning kite. The defeat of not one but two T2M units working together was shocking, but still more shocking was the fact that the coverage was always edited to suggest that Team Tomorrow, though tightly pressed, emerged from the fray victorious. Media coverage of the battles set viewing records worldwide, but still no one knew that Team Tomorrow had been soundly defeated. There are two proofs of this defeat, the first being the simple fact that elites still battle on in conflicts all over the world while Utopia turns a blind eye. The second takes the form of Project Utopia policy: Team Tomorrow is prohibited from entering crises involving enemy novas unless T2M outnumber their opponents two to one, or better. And yet we call them heroes.

N! Advertisement

Advertisement for the N! network:

You've seen them fighting in the ring on the XWF, but when it comes to excitement, nothing compares to true, in-the-field, nova-powered combat! Straight from the war-ravaged fields and villages of West Africa, N! brings you *African Devastation!*, a documentary on the role of novas in war. You'll see live footage of Team Tomorrow battling elites hired by African strongmen and dictators. Watch Totentanz, the most dangerous elite in the world, engage and destroy a doomed Tomorrowite! Who will win and who will go down in bitter defeat — and what awesome powers will victor and vanquished unleash in their titanic battle?

Prepare to be N!-tertained all next week on the N! network with *African Devastation!*

OpSite Posting

From the *T2M Fan Alert! Web site*, January 2002

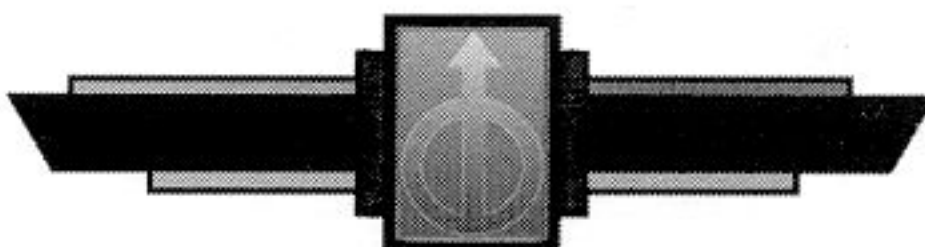
Can you believe it? Now we're going to have *two* Team Tomorrows to follow!

That's right! Last week Team Tomorrow leader Caestus Pax told the world that, "due to the expanded need for Team Tomorrow's services all over the world," the team was splitting into two "branches": the group's overall headquarters would move to Mexico City, which will also be the base of operations for T2M Americas. The new branch, T2M Europe, will build a new base in Venice, Italy.

Caestus Pax himself will go over to Europe to head the team there; Anthony "Lightning" Chang, Ewen "The Apollo Kid" Banks, Hiram "Slag" Goldberg and Pratima "Splash" Basham among others, will join him in Venice. Ricardo Montoya-Bernal, Jennifer "Slider" Landers, Ana Graça Texeira, Allison "Psyche" Pfaltzgraff and Pualani "Pele" Kapunani will move down to Mexico City and may begin recruiting for new members! Ragnarockette and Shadow Artist are still considered Tomorrowites in training and will continue their training with Pax at the Rashoud facility in Venice (but not for very much longer: rumor has it that these two will "graduate" within the next six months and after that, the sky's not even the limit!).

Caestus Pax has even left open the possibility of *more* teams in the future! In an interview with *60 Minutes*, he said, "As more and more novas continue to erupt and the Team Tomorrow roster continues to grow, we're going to find that we have more resources to accomplish Project Utopia's mission — and, depending on what some of the new novas are like, there may be more need for us, too. We clearly have both the means and the need to establish other branches of Team Tomorrow in the future. It's a question of when, not if."

As always, stay tuned to the *Team Tomorrow Fan Alert* for all the latest news on T2M! When they do decide to follow through on this, you'll hear about it first in T2MFA!



Michael from Alexandria: That guy's blind if he can't see it, Jor. You're absolutely right. I've got a friend who's an aide to one of the senators on the intelligence subcommittee, see.



CHAPTER 3: TEAM TOMORROW

JM: Wow, the senate has an intelligence committee? I didn't think they had enough to fill a thimble, much less an entire committee.

Michael from Alexandria: (chuckles) Yeah, right. Anyhow, right before all the novas started showing up in Africa, the committee was having these overtime meetings every night, closed door ones and all. I bet they were planning the whole thing.

JM: You could be right, Jim; thanks for calling in. Time for a sponsor break, folks. Stay tuned for more of the *Jordan McDevitt Show* after these messages.

Article from *Newsweek*From "End of the Five Families," *Newsweek*, November 2001

Once again, the crimebusters of Project Utopia have done the seemingly impossible. This time they've decapitated the Mafia once and for all.

Two days ago, at a joint press conference with the U.S. Attorney's office for the Southern District of New York, newly appointed FBI Director Christine Sellai and the Chief of Police for New York City, Team Tomorrow leader Caestus Pax announced that a Team Tomorrow-F.B.I.-N.Y.P.D. task force had simultaneously arrested every Mafia "made man" and associate in the five boroughs of New York and supplied a list of grievances against each. *Every single one.* From the lowest associate to the *capo di tutti capi*, everyone working for or with La Cosa Nostra in New York is now sitting in jail, though many are awaiting a bond hearing. The heads of the Five Families will have to hold their conferences in a jail cell instead of a social club.

"New York, like much of the United States, has lived with the specter of the Mafia and its murders, its racketeering, its prostitution and its gun and drug smuggling for far too long," said Caestus Pax. "Team Tomorrow is proud to have been a part of this historic law-enforcement operation and expects to help officials in other cities do the same. Additionally, intelligence gathered by Team Tomorrow will help the authorities to cut off the rest of organized crime in the city, including Russian, Dominican, Chinese and Japanese gangs, within a month or two."

Said Richard Gallo, the defender representing the Five Families, "Telepathic interrogation is a clear violation of the Fifth Amendment, and we're going to fight this all the way to the Supreme Court."

"I'm going to have to look for a new job," joked Special Agent Daniel Archuleta, head of the FBI's Organized Crime division in New York.

From "A Knockout Blow for World Crime?," *U.S. News & World Report*, October 2003

It brought down the Five Families in New York. Now it's going after the Mafia — and everyone else in the underworld of organized crime — around the world.

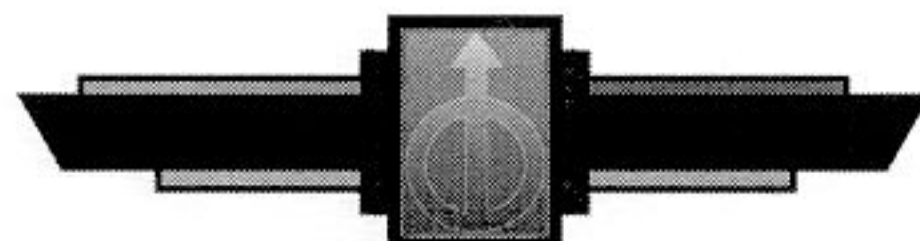
Last week, spokesmen for Project Utopia and several major law-enforcement and intelligence agencies announced the formation of the World Organized Crime and Terrorism Task Force, a network of agencies and organizations intended to help combat criminals and terrorists.

"For years organized crime has realized the benefits of operating transnationally," said Utopia's Assistant Director Ioan Kevratsi, who will head the Task Force jointly with an official from INTERPOL. "When they cross borders, the power of national police to pursue them becomes

limited at best. Now the law has found a way to work transnationally, too."

Member organizations of the Task Force network — which include the FBI, D.E.A., INTERPOL, Scotland Yard and many other national police forces, as well as "consultants" from numerous intelligence agencies such as the Mossad and CIA — have agreed to share all information gathered about organized crime and terrorism, to allow the agents of other members to operate freely on their soil and to streamline extradition procedures.

"We already solved the Mafia problem in America," said Director Kevratsi. "Now we'll do the same in Italy and the rest of the world and we'll polish off the Triads and yakuza gangs too, while we're at it. Now they've got nowhere to hide."





From the book *Dreaming of Erehwon: A History of Project Utopia*, by Alexander Seivers

In September, 2002, Team Tomorrow got its second chance to go into battle against other novas. On the 15th of that month, tensions over the long-disputed region of Kashmir flared up again, this time with a third participant — China — weighing in alongside the traditional disputants, India and Pakistan. Rather than mobilize significant numbers of troops, each side instead turned to novas to fight a proxy war for them. India and China both had several “officially sanctioned” nova soldiers; Pakistan was forced to hire elites on the open market.

Two days of fighting passed before the United Nations authorized Team Tomorrow to put a stop to it. During that time, sporadic battles between Indian and Pakistani novas obliterated the entire city of Srinagar, killing over 30,000 people. The biggest confrontation between the three combatants shattered the top of 7,800-foot-tall Mt. Rakaposhi, leaving only a 5,900-foot-tall stump and littering the ground

for miles around with stony rubble.

In response to worldwide outrage over this chain of events, Team Tomorrow sent nearly a score of novas — the largest group ever assembled in one place for a single non-charitable purpose up to that time. Team Tomorrow was determined to put their African defeat behind them and emerge from this conflict victorious. They did not split up to deal with each nova “army” at once, but acted instead as a united front, attacking one group after another *en masse* and beating each one with sheer power — they outnumbered any one combatant’s novas by at least two to one and often three or four to one. First they tackled the Chinese, the largest single nova group on the battlefield, in the eastern Ladakh Mountains. The battle lasted nearly an hour, an extraordinarily long time for a nova conflict, and devastated several mountain valleys. The turning point came when T2M nova Slider used her teleportation powers to enable Caestus Pax, Allison “Psyche” Pfaltzgraff and Anthony “Lightning” Chang to flank the cadre of Chinese novas and attack them from behind while several of her teammates including Griffin Armstrong and Ewen “The Apollo Kid” Banks attacked from the front. Caught between hammer and tongs, the Chinese force collapsed. They and their comrades were soon being



CHAPTER 3: TEAM TOMORROW

held in specially built containment facilities created by Utopia's Science and Technology branch, much to the embarrassment of their team leader, Shoi-ming Chen, code-named "Scarlet Thunderstorm."

The Indian novas, seeing how effective Team Tomorrow really was, quietly backed down and left the area to return to New Delhi. The Pakistani elites were another matter entirely. One of their leaders, a powerful Canadian elite going by the name "Cobalt," had been an enemy of Caestus Pax's for many years and refused to back down, even when the Pakistani officials who hired him began to question the wisdom of opposing the Utopians. The two groups of novas clashed in and around the city of Rawalpindi, a battlefield likely chosen by the elites hoping that the "squeamish" T2M novas would hold back for fear of damaging property or injuring civilians. No such luck. Although they took as much care as possible not to cause gratuitous damage, the Tomorrowites pulled no punches. The battle lasted 10 min-

utes and resulted in a thorough defeat for the elites who, despite their fighting experience, were no match for the numerically superior and generally more powerful, Utopian team. The climax of the battle was the highly-personal conflict between Caestus Pax and Cobalt, which ended abruptly when an enraged Pax utilized his devastating "Fist of Peace" technique to hurl Cobalt face-first through a stone monument and two meters of pavement, cement and earth in what has been described as "the most spectacularly violent scene ever filmed." Utopia spin-doctors were quick to point out that Pax was simply doing his duty and not pursuing personal vendettas.

Team Tomorrow remained in the area long enough to establish the Kashmir Demilitarized Zone, a region that, in theory, the UN and Project Utopia would jointly oversee (a noble effort that appears not to have lasted the year). Its members then returned home to accolades.

T2M-A/P seeks a helicopter pilot with more than 2,500

N! Advertisement

From an advertisement for the N! network:

Prepare to be N!-tertained as the N! network brings you *Battle for Kashmir!* Produced by Gaal and Najarian, the award-winning nova documentary team that brought you *African Devastation!*, *Battle for Kashmir* reveals the truth behind the battle that took place between India, Pakistan and China for control over this isolated mountain region. We show you the conflict at its most brutal and let you see how the novas of Team Tomorrow brought the battle to an end, saving property and countless lives. Tune in tomorrow night at 8:00 PM Eastern for *Battle for Kashmir!*

General News Release

Team Tomorrow Americas Eases Effects of Earthquake

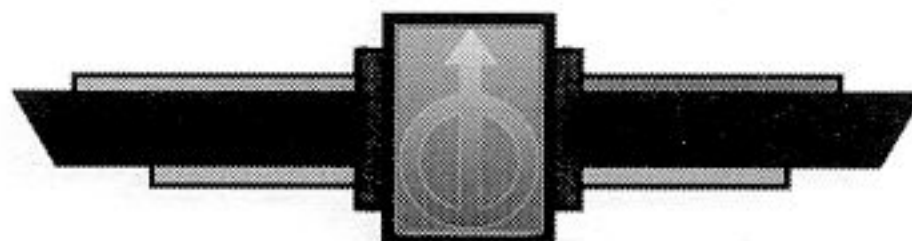
Thousands of Lives Saved by Team's Valiant Actions

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The devastating earthquake that shook central Mexico in the early afternoon hours of October 13, 2002 would have been more devastating still if not for one fortuitous event: the relocation of Team Tomorrow America's headquarters from New York to here several months ago.

"Thank God they were on the scene," said the city's mayor, Raul Alfonso Silverio y Estansa. "Even a few minutes' delay in responding would have cost hundreds of lives." In fact, city officials estimate that the death and destruction caused by the earthquake would have been nearly twice as bad had Tomorrowites not prevented buildings from toppling, extinguished fires and held up collapsing bridges long enough for drivers to get off them.

"This was a real trial by fire for our newest member, Gvuthbjörg "Ragnarokette" Danielsdottir," said the Team's leader, Ricardo Montoya-Bernal. "Her telekinetic powers allowed us to save literally dozens of important buildings, including the national palace."

Team Tomorrow Americas has also been instrumental in getting aid to Mexicans left homeless by the disaster. New shelters have already been constructed and shipments of food, donated primarily by the United States, have been taken directly to the suffering victims.



CHAPTER 3: TEAM TOMORROW

Transcript of CNN news report aired March 9, 2003

Announcer: CNN is pleased to bring you this dramatic footage of the rescue of the space shuttle *Discovery* by Team Tomorrow earlier today. With us to comment on what you're about to see is Dr. Maria Callahan of NASA.

Maria Callahan: All right, what you're seeing here is the shuttle orbiting the Earth normally. The picture is being taken by a camera located on a satellite several miles away. Everything's going smoothly...

...and there's the impact of the meteor. We've slowed it down so that your viewers can better see what's happening. As you can see, what we believe to be a meteor — a small chunk of rock and metal traveling through space, basically — hit the body of the shuttle very close to the main fuel tank. Had the tank itself been hit, the entire shuttle would likely have exploded.

Shuttle astronaut voice (from screen): "Houston, this is shuttle *Discovery*! We have been hit, repeat, we have been hit, by an unknown object! A fire has started near the communications module."

MC: And here, almost before Houston can respond to the disaster, comes Team Tomorrow. Naturally, only members able to survive the rigors of outer space and move around there were able to come to the rescue; that's why

you don't see Ricardo Montoya-Bernal or Slider, for example. We should mention that this footage comes to us courtesy of the acclaimed nova filmmakers Chris Gaal and James Najarian, two artists of amazing ability who have proven again and again that they are capable of filming any nova event, however large or small, however violent or calm it may be.

Announcer: I see Caestus Pax... Gvuthbjörg Danielsdottir... Ana Graça Texeira... about four others I can't identify....

MC: As you can see, some of them are wearing life-support gear. This gear was provided to Team Tomorrow about a year ago by NASA for use in several of their projects related to cleaning the ocean floor. We never expected to reap such a dividend!

All right, now Force and other Tomorrowites have stabilized the shuttle. It looks like Caestus Pax and some of the others are putting out the fires while the Ragnarokette holds the shuttle in place with her telekinetic powers — which would come in useful on many space missions, not just rescues.

Announcer: Has NASA ever tried to recruit novas to assist with space missions?

MC: Not that I'm aware of, though I'm sure we'll reconsider after this. I have heard rumors of a nova space-exploration organization of some sort, but no details. Now the team has the shuttle completely under control and is using radios to make sure that none of the astronauts were injured. And now, they're starting to tow the crippled shuttle back to Earth.

General News Release

Utopians React To "Null Manifesto"

Teams Tomorrow Condemn "Hatemongering" Document

VENICE, ITALY, November 1, 2005 (AP) — Responding swiftly to the "Null Manifesto" issued yesterday by an individual calling himself Divis Mal, the novas of the Teams Tomorrow and Project Utopia universally condemned the Manifesto and its "hatemongering" message.

"The statements made in this 'manifesto' are extremely irresponsible," said Teams Tomorrow leader Caestus Pax. "The scientific and philosophical evidence is clear; novas are *humans* and therefore entitled to receive the same privileges and perform the same civic duties as any baseline. That includes obeying the laws of lawfully constituted governments. I can only hope that this "Divis Mal" will soon come to understand that and to retract his statements — and that no nova will be so misguided as to take his words seriously."

In addition to releasing this statement to the press, Caestus Pax and Project Utopia officials reportedly held a closed meeting with the Security Council yesterday, in which it is believed they promised to monitor the activities of the so-called "Teragen," a wide-ranging group of novas who have already expressed support for the Manifesto and its spokesman.

"I honestly don't see the point of this 'manifesto'," said Jennifer "Slider" Landers of Team Tomorrow Americas. "*Homo sapiens sapiens* and *Homo sapiens novus* have always gotten along well, a few bumps in the road aside and to try to stir up animosity between them at this juncture is either the work of a madman, or of someone seeking to advance his own private agenda. Whoever's or whatever's behind this "Teragen" group, I pray they see the error of their ways soon. It totally goes against the spirit of the Team Tomorrow Code of Honor and everything I personally believe in."





Welcome to the Official Team Tomorrow OpNet site.

Team Tomorrow exists to defend human rights, to improve living conditions throughout the world, to protect those who cannot protect themselves, to serve the global community, to foster peace among nations and to implement Project Utopia's goals of a brighter future for all of humankind.

In these pages, you will learn about Team Tomorrow, or T2M as it's popularly called, meet its members and see regular updates on the Team's activities throughout the world. You can browse the calendar of upcoming public appearances by T2M members and peruse their biographies. Everything you ever wanted to know about the fabulous men and women of Team Tomorrow appears here for your edification and enjoyment.

The Utopia Project introduced T2M in January of 1999. It created the group to be an emergency-response team of specially trained operatives who deal with crises around the globe. Boasting approximately 40 members stationed in four main headquarters, T2M remains on alert, ever vigilant for situations that endanger people's safety or threaten world peace. Novas make up the strike forces of Team Tomorrow, but many baselines provide invaluable support to T2M. Working together, they pool their talents and skills to create an international team of professionals and experts who can react with speed and efficiency to any call for help.

Comments from T2M fans

You folks are the greatest! I'll be 79 this July and it makes me proud to know that I've survived long enough to see the world cleaned up and changed for the good. When I was a kid, we didn't have much hope for the world, but now you're here. My grandchildren and great-grandchildren deserve so much more than what I had. You're the ones making it happen. Keep up the good work!

—George Pandapas, age 78, from Roanoke, Virginia, USA

My teacher, Frau Heister, has been teaching us about Team Tomorrow and all the things you do, like fighting crime and rescuing people and making little kids happy because they don't have to worry about being hungry or afraid anymore. It's the children who need help the most. We are weak, but you are strong. I love you, Team Tomorrow. When I grow up, I hope I can be a nova just like you.

—Nina Schweizer, age 9, from Frankfurt, Germany

The white knights of my dreams, you of Team Tomorrow ignite my imagination and I find I can, at last, envision a world of peace, love, hope and charity. What greater gift could anyone offer mankind? My most sincere thanks to you for taking up the battle against the dragons of corruption, ignorance and violence. You're my heroes.

—Felícia Josefa, age 29 (and holding), from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

If you'd like to send your own comments to Team Tomorrow and possibly see them here, simply email us. Be sure to include your name, age and your hometown.



TEAM TOMORROW LINKS

HISTORY	CALENDAR OF EVENTS
BIOGRAPHIES	T2M TRIVIA
T2M HEADQUARTERS	IN MEMORIUM
ACTIVITIES	PROJECT UTOPIA

History

Discover the history of Team Tomorrow and learn the behind-the-scenes planning that went into the Team's establishment and development.

Biographies

How did your favorite T2M nova erupt? What has he or she done since then? Keep current and amaze your friends with your knowledge of these global heroes.

T2M Headquarters

Learn about the different locations of the Team Tomorrow Headquarters where the agents live, work and train.

Activities

Enjoy constant updates on the activities of Team Tomorrow as they work to improve the standard-of-living throughout the world.

Calendar of Events

Is a Team Tomorrow member coming to your town? What OpNet shows should you watch to see important interviews with the novas of T2M? Find out here.

T2M Trivia

How much do you know about Team Tomorrow? Test your knowledge with the interactive T2M Trivia Quiz. Compete with your friends and family. It's fun!

In Memoriam

Dedicated to the memories of those brave T2Mers who died serving humanity.

Project Utopia

Check out the OpNet site of T2M's parent organization.

CHAPTER 3: TEAM TOMORROW

Recruitment

Team Tomorrow recruits only the most qualified novas and baselines, though it has its own particular view of what qualities define an appropriate T2M employee. It employs approximately 40 novas for the core cells and over 400 baselines for the support teams. Competition for employment with T2M is stiff, but once you've secured a job with them, you're assured of continued success in your career. So long as you leave T2M with a clean record, you can easily find a job with the highest paying corporations or governments. It means that you met Team Tomorrow's standards.

The Human Resources Department at T2M Central Headquarters deals only with the employment of baselines

for the organization's support staff. Caestus Pax handles all the interviewing and hiring of the novas themselves. The Human Resources Department sorts through several applications daily. It keeps extensive files, which include all the applications ever received.

All employees at T2M, both nova and baseline, undergo an orientation that includes special training and testing. They must all pass an appropriate level of security clearance. Human Resources does an exhaustive investigation into their past, their credit, their families, their friends and their political and religious affiliations. They must pass a stringent psychological exam. Even the janitors must submit to this scrutiny.

Security Codes

Security Codes at Team Tomorrow

Due to the highly sensitive aspects of some T2M missions, the group has established security levels. Each employee has a security rating, and he or she is privy to information appropriate to, or beneath, that classification level.

Delta (D): A delta mission is public information and anyone may have access to the facts surrounding it, including the press.

Team Tomorrow personnel must have one of the following security clearances:

Gamma (G): 85% of Team Tomorrow personnel hold this clearance level, but it still requires an extensive background and standard security check. Most missions originally rated *gamma* will eventually become *delta*, once T2M has gathered all relevant information.

Beta (B): The middle rating is held by most office personnel, pilots and those peripherally involved in T2M mission completion. A T2M employee may not discuss a beta mission, considered *sensitive*, with anyone who does not have beta-level clearance.

Alpha (A): Need to know only. Caestus Pax may temporarily assign this level to an employee, but otherwise, very few individuals at T2M have this clearance. Most nova agents must have Alpha clearance; though there are exceptions. Agents undergoing security or background checks or who are considered potential security risks are not granted clearance above beta. No employee involved in an Alpha mission may discuss it with anyone, their fellow novas included, unless the individual already has official knowledge of the incident.

Baseline Employment Opportunities at T2M

Official Utopia/Team Tomorrow Press Release

From: Offices of Caestus Pax, Team Tomorrow Central Headquarters, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Contact: Janet R. Pearlman, Human Resources Agent, HR Department, T2M Central, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Re: Job Openings for the week of July 12, 2007

Team Tomorrow, a subsidiary of Project Utopia, has the following job openings available for qualified individuals. Send all résumés, references and a cover letter stating your reasons for wanting to join our staff, to: Team Tomorrow HR Dept., attn: Janet R. Pearlman, T2M Central, 201 Bekele Weya Street, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Be sure to include the job code of the position for which you're applying in your cover letter and on the front of the envelope.

Helicopter Pilot

Job Code: T2M-SC3-ASD-AP-021

Location: Talaud Island, Indonesia

Category: Transportation/Air



CHAPTER 3: TEAM TOMORROW

T2M-A/P seeks a helicopter pilot with more than 2,500 hours of logged flight time. The ideal candidate will have flown either military or civil search-and-rescue and airdrop missions and have experience flying in crisis areas. Familiarity with numerous varieties of helicopters helpful.

Aerobics Instructor

Job Code: T2M-SC1-ASR-EuHR-003

Location: Venice, Italy

Category: Health and Recreation

T2M-Eu needs an aerobics instructor for the employee health and recreation program. Daytime or evening hours available. Must be fully certified; knowledge of CPR helpful.

Event Promotions Coordinator

Job Code: T2M-SC2-ABM-CPR-058

Location: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Category: Public relations

T2M-C has an opening for someone to oversee event marketing and schedule promotional appearances for the

members and employees of Team Tomorrow. The ideal candidate must have had at least five years experience developing strategic-level promotional plans for a major celebrity or corporation. Masters degree in marketing preferred. Candidate must demonstrate exceptional organizational, presentational, verbal and written skills.

Mechanic

Job Code: T2M-SC1-APL-AMVM-101

Location: Mexico City, Mexico

Category: Transportation/Vehicle Maintenance

T2M-Am seeks a hypercombustion engine mechanic to maintain the vehicles used by its agents and employees. Applicants reaching the interview stage will be required to take both a written and a hands-on exam to determine their skill level. The chosen candidate will have extensive experience with vehicle maintenance and repair, will show an ability to work well with others in a friendly team environment and will agree to work long hours to meet deadlines.

The Interview Process

The Interview Process

Transcription of recorded preliminary phone interview

Interviewer: Samond J. Dupré, H.R. Officer, T2M

Interviewee: Sudipda Boragi, applicant for Office Services Assistant/Receptionist

Date: Dec. 15, 2007

SD: Good morning, Mr. Boragi. This is Samond Dupré from Team Tomorrow and I'm calling in regard to your application for the open Office Services Assistant/Receptionist position.

SB: Oh! That's great! Does this mean you're interested in me?

SD: Well, this is the first stage. I'll do a short phone interview with you and we go from there. If you pass this stage, then we fly you in for a more in-depth interview and testing process. Do you have time to answer a few questions?

SB: Absolutely.

SD: Thank you. Could you tell me why you've applied to a position that you're obviously so overqualified for?

SB: <laugh> The *money*. And of course, I also want to work for someone who's actually doing something good for the world. I don't want to work for the *corporate machine*.

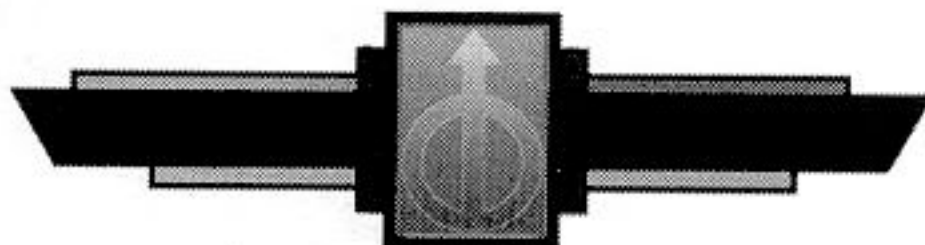
SD: Okay. Do you foresee being bored doing photocopying and answering phones?

SB: Not really. It would be worth it. I'm willing to *start at the bottom* in order to *build a career* with Team Tomorrow. I'm thinking long term.

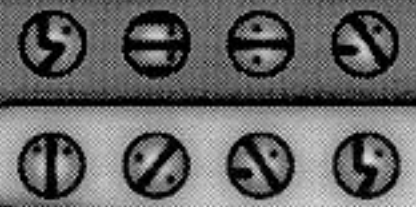
SD: My next question has two parts. First, what qualities do you bring to the position that make you the best choice for it? Second, of those qualities, could you please rate them on a scale of one being a quality that is terribly important to the job and five being a quality that is not important to the performance of the duties involved? I'm sorry, can you hold

Quit wasting my time with these morons. This person obviously only wants the job for the money and the prestige. He has trouble-maker written all over him.
Pax

72



CHAPTER 3: TEAM TOMORROW



From the fan OpSite T2Day, October 2007

Making Your Mark
by Hans Gilles

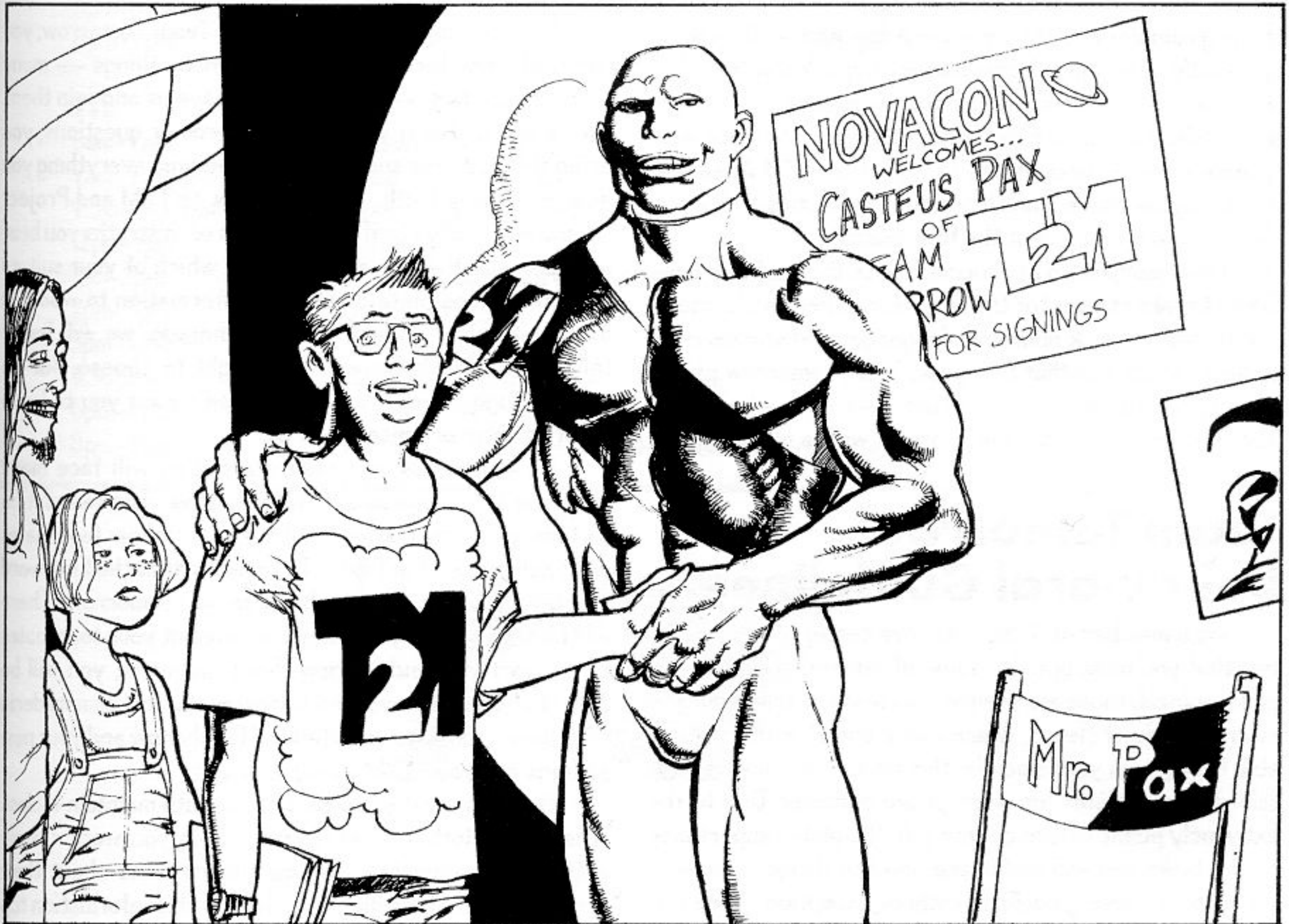
Everyone has fantasized at one point or other of becoming a part of Team Tomorrow. With the strategies listed in this article, anyone can increase her (or his) chances of rising to the top of the fat application slush pile sitting on Caestus Pax's desk. Whether you're nova or baseline, a few simple pieces of advice and some planning will help you on your way to a long and productive career with Team Tomorrow.

1. Education and Experience: Undoubtedly, one of the most important things you can do is learn, stay in school and get your degrees. Focus on your education. A degree in Communications, Public Relations or Theater can only help. Once you've graduated, apply yourself in specific areas of expertise and work hard to garner as much experience as you can. Volunteer for organizations like the Peace Corps. Sign up for an internship in the United Nations or your own country's diplomatic corps. Any of the above will give you experience in fields preparatory to

what you'll be doing with T2M. Whether you have a career in janitorial services, food services or nuclear physics, learn everything you can about your chosen field and become the best.

2. Résumé Services: When you get ready to put together your résumé, hire a T2M-compatible résumé service to write it for you. They know all the ins and outs of what Team Tomorrow looks for when weeding through the thousands of applications they receive every day. These services have dedicated themselves to keeping up-to-date on the most flattering word choices, the most eye-catching layouts and the most acceptable formats for résumés that will go to T2M. Use them. They're worth every euro.

3. Sell Yourself: Don't be modest. If you get a phone interview with one of the T2M Human Resources agents, it won't pay for you to downplay your own abilities, goals and ideals. Let them know what you can do for them. Think this out in advance so that you're prepared when they call. Make notes that you can refer to during the phone interview. Memorize them if you get a face-to-face meeting. You're your own best public-relations specialist.



4. **Know T2M and Utopia:** Brush up on your history and information about T2M and Utopia. Memorize the Team Tomorrow Code of Honor. You'll make a much better impression if you can quote their statistics to them or if you mention the successes they've enjoyed.

5. **Cultivate Your Enthusiasm:** If you're excited about them, they're more likely to be excited about you. Show them through your enthusiasm just how much you really want to be a part of Team Tomorrow. Don't be shy. Let them feel your dedication to their causes.

Visit the Team Tomorrow OpNet site for current job listings and specific requirements for the application process, including the address of their Human Resources Department.

Nova Orientation

New Team Tomorrow agents have already undergone extensive training with Project Utopia in one of their facilities. They must already have proven a high degree of control over their quantum abilities. T2M will not hire unknown or untrained agents. Furthermore, once enlisted in Team Tomorrow Auxiliary, they undergo two to twelve additional months of intensive training that prepares them for the rigorous duties of a T2M agent. They live in the training complex at T2M Central in Addis Ababa. They work constantly, attending classes and getting to know their fellow teammates. Fortunately, most novas have an accelerated intellect and acclimate to this intensive instruction with relative ease. A nova serves as a part of T2M Auxiliary, practicing her powers and learning team tactics until a position opens up on one of the four teams.

Once assigned to a particular arena, the applicant continues to take classes for the first year of her employment. She learns to speak numerous languages and studies nova combat tactics. For that first year, Team Tomorrow places her on probation and she must continue to prove herself or T2M will drop her from the program with a minimal pension. It's in the contract.

Team Tomorrow Behavioral Guidelines

As a member of T2M, you have certain responsibilities that you must uphold. Some of our requirements are philosophical; those are spelled out clearly in the Team Tomorrow Code of Honor, which every one of you should be able to recite in your sleep by this point. We have also established guidelines for appropriate behavior. Due to the extremely public nature of your job, the global importance of the tasks you will undertake and the danger involved, we enforce these guidelines without exception. They en-

sure a smooth-running team effort, a positive public image and the safety of all T2M operatives. Please memorize the guidelines. Know them, Embrace them. Live them.

Be positive. Never, under any circumstance, make a negative public statement regarding Project Utopia, Team Tomorrow or any of your fellow agents. Those operatives who have released false statements in the past have only embarrassed themselves and damaged their popularity rating with the public. The truth will come out. You will regret rash or angry proclamations. Remember the Code of Honor line that calls upon you to act honorably and compassionately, "especially when circumstances make it difficult to do so." That line is there for a reason. We value your image because you now represent Team Tomorrow. Keep it positive, supportive and upbeat when speaking to the media or the public. Your reputation is Team Tomorrow's reputation and vice versa.

Be a team player. Never take it upon yourself to intervene in a situation or exert your influence without the directive of your superior. We value you and research all scenarios before we send you into a crisis situation. On your own, you don't have these resources to warn you of potential disaster. Don't put yourself or your team at unnecessary risk. Do *not* be a vigilante.

Be discerning. As you work for Team Tomorrow, you will find many factions telling you many things — many of which are lies — to get you to leave us and join them. All we ask is that if you have concerns or questions, you bring them to your superior. Don't assume everything you hear holds any truth. The directors of T2M and Project Utopia will gladly clarify any rumors or mistruths you hear and give you the power to discern which of your suitors are using incomplete or skewed information to woo you away. Likewise, if they are being honest, we will freely tell you so. We believe in your right to choose, but we care enough about you that we don't want you to leave T2M on false premises. Ask us.

Be courteous and cooperate. You will face many stressful situations as a T2M operative. The temptation to take your frustrations out on your fellow teammates will likely arise. Don't do it. Remember that the kind word you give today will come back to you tomorrow. There will be times when you'll have no one but your teammates to support you and, during those moments, you will be glad that you have worked to foster a warm camaraderie with them. You have an extended family now and your new siblings are your T2M *co-operatives*.

Be trustworthy. Some T2M agents maintain a classified plainclothes identity and, when you work closely with your teammates, you may learn facts about their private lives and families. We classify this information top



CHAPTER 3: TEAM TOMORROW

secret. You must never reveal the true identity of another agent to anyone. Many destructive forces would love nothing more than the chance to blackmail a member of T2M by kidnapping a loved one. We diligently protect the families of our agents. We expect you to do the same. When you reveal an operative's identity, you potentially endanger the lives of many people.

Seminar Schedule

Team Tomorrow Nova Seminar Schedule

Come to each seminar prepared with writing utensil and paper for taking notes. We require that nova recruits attend every session in order to pass the orientation phase of their training. The center will administer a final exam that each nova recruit must pass before becoming an active member of Team Tomorrow. Good luck.

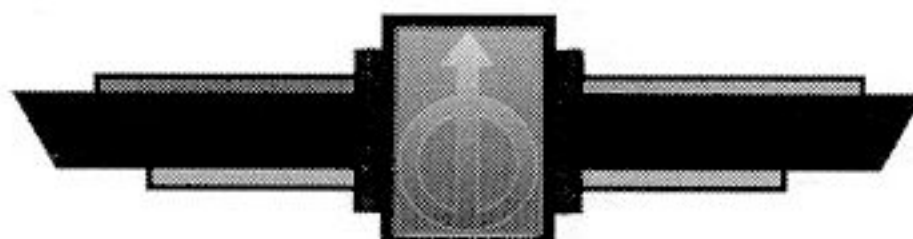
Classes this session begin 3/2 and end 5/30.

MWF

6am-9am	Physical Training
9am-9:30am	Breakfast
9:30am-12pm	Public-relations Strategies
12pm-1pm	Lunch
1pm-2pm	Speech
2pm-3pm	Quantum Physics
3pm-3:30pm	Afternoon snack break
3:30pm-6pm	World History and Geography
6pm-8pm	Dinner
8pm-9pm	Romance Languages (3/2-4/15) and Slavic Languages (4/16-5/30)

TTh

6am-9am	Physical Training
9am-9:30am	Breakfast
9:30am-12pm	Team Tomorrow and International Law
12pm-1pm	Lunch
1pm-2pm	World Leaders and International Diplomacy
2pm-3pm	Quantum Physics
3pm-3:30pm	Afternoon snack break
3:30pm-6pm	Cultural Studies/Sensitivity Training
6pm-8pm	Dinner break
8pm-9pm	Germanic Languages (3/2-4/15) and Arabic Languages (4/16-5/30)



Integration

Once a nova recruit has finished the two-month orientation process, she gets her orders and joins whichever regional team to which she has been assigned. Though she has no choice in this matter, she can request her preference. Just because she comes from Germany doesn't mean that Team Tomorrow will assign her to the European arena. She may find herself in Africa, Asia or the Americas, depending on where she's needed most.

When a nova joins a cell, the other members of that cell tend to welcome her warmly. The Team Tomorrow administration at each of the headquarters plans a public celebration and encourages all cell members to attend. Most look forward to these festivities and the chance to meet the newest face on the team. T2M always invites the press to these events and the public looks forward to the reports, often holding simultaneous parties of their own to celebrate along with the Team Tomorrow staff (albeit remotely).

Personal Letter

9/02/08

Hi, Mom!

Well, it's official. Did you notice the return address on the envelope? Yup, T2M has assigned me to the Americas. I'm so excited I could just burst. After my graduation from Orientation (I just stood there and beamed when I learned that I'd passed all my finals), they flew me in a private jet out to Mexico City with Shadow Artist who'd also been assigned there (Yay!!!). We got met at the airport by Skew! And god, is he handsome! I thought I was going to melt!

They took us to the complex and let us get showered and changed and things, then we went to this special pig roast (yes, you read that right) in our honor. They had three whole hogs roasting on spits. It smelled so good, my mouth was watering. All the novas of the team were there, except for Ana Graça Texeira, who had something else to do, I guess. Anyway, we all wore our Eufiber Team Tomorrow uniforms and they introduced us and stuff. I had to get up on stage and say a few words. You'd have been proud of me. I was so nervous. There were reporters all over the place and at least a hundred other people. I guess they always make a big deal when new people join the team.

Things got a little tense for awhile, when one of the reporters started asking questions about Slider, but Mr. Montoya-Bernal was so cool about how he answered the questions and then moved on so that the reporter couldn't bring everybody down. It was a party, after all and nobody wanted to talk about sad things.

Well, I have to cut this short for now. I'm due in a few minutes for a briefing on my first mission! I don't think I'll be able to tell you about it until it's over, but don't worry about me. I'm working with the very best in the world. I'm learning lots from them already. I'll write a longer letter in a couple days when I get some free time.

All my love,

Your girl, Geyser.

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

T2M Organization

Team Tomorrow has divided the world into four areas, or arenas, in which it operates. The Central arena includes Africa, the Middle East, all countries west of China and south of the Russian Confederation. The European arena covers continental Europe, the Russian Confederation and everything north, including the Arctic region. The American arena includes North, South and Central America, as well as Antarctica (although the survivalists who call themselves the Protectors aren't likely to call on them much). Finally, the Asian arena contains the Far East, the Pacific Islands, China, Mongolia, Australia and New Zealand.

In each of the arenas, a group of agents, called a cell, operates as a team. Each cell has from six to ten novas who form the core of the cell. These novas perform the military disarmament, counter-terrorist strikes, humanitarian aid and disaster clean-up. Each cell has an internal team leader who takes charge during a mission in the field and each arena has an administrative head, the director, who decides how the team will approach the various missions. The administrative head has more authority than the field leader at all times.

Each headquarters has seven functional departments: administration, public relations, transportation, intelligence, munitions, housing and health/recreation. More than a hundred baselines live and work at these headquarters filling an



CHAPTER 3: TEAM TOMORROW



array of service positions, flying novas around, organizing their schedules, cleaning their quarters, cooking their food, preparing and repairing their equipment, ordering supplies and providing for their entertainment and recreation. They work within a typical hierarchy system with department heads and section bosses.

The Director

Each of the arenas has a director (with a small “d” to differentiate them from the section Directors of Project Utopia) that oversees the operations in that sector of the world. The director has permanent Alpha security clearance and has proven him- or herself a loyal employee of Utopia. Within the system, all directors report to Caestus Pax, who heads the T2M-Central arena.

A Team Tomorrow headquarters director has many duties and takes full responsibility for everything that occurs in his domain. The director determines which novas to dispatch for a particular mission and assigns security levels to situations. He and his staff track which nova agents are currently available, which are out on assignment and which have the powers necessary to deal with a particular challenge.

Although each individual director approaches his job somewhat differently, delegating more or less responsibility, they all keep fully abreast of everything that happens. Caestus Pax is, currently, the only nova director, and he’s the only one who actively participates in missions.

The directors meet for a planning conference four times a year at the Central HQ in Addis Ababa. During these meetings, they discuss challenges to, and solutions for, the prosperous future of Team Tomorrow. The directors make recommendations and requests for equipment, funding and personnel expansion. Administrators from Project Utopia also attend from time to time.

Cell Leaders

Each of the four Team Tomorrow nova cells has a leader who oversees the T2M nova team. This operative serves as the go-between for the cell and the director. He has a more direct link to the novas on the team and can more readily spot trouble. Often, the cell leader lives with the other cell members in the barracks on headquarters grounds.

The cell leader ensures that the entire team is combat-ready at all times. Toward this goal, he or she takes an active role in their training. Between missions, the cell leader runs the team through drills and prepares them for the eventualities of their job. He cultivates a strong *esprit de corps* among them, serving in many ways as a sort of social director with a military edge.

During missions, especially potentially confrontational

or violent ones, the cell leader takes charge in the field. Although he or she must still bow to the authority of the director, he has the authority to direct attack strategies and call for retreat. In most instances, the director does not override the orders of the cell leader when the CL has encountered battle.

Floating Nova Agents

Some of the more experienced T2M agents may eventually leave their cells and become trouble-shooters or back-up, traveling around the world to help whichever cell needs them most. These novas remain on call at all times and could easily fly thousands of miles and deal with three crises in one week. During another week, they may do absolutely nothing. The key is that they have to be ready to go on a moment’s notice.

These novas usually have special abilities that make them particularly useful in specific situations, but not terribly helpful in others. For example, Firefly has the ability to send her consciousness to “tunnel” through solid objects and see what’s on the other side. While her talent isn’t much good when the team is cleaning up a toxic spill, she came in extremely handy to T2M-Am when searching for survivors of the tragic Central Mexico earthquake of 2002. Later that same year, she proved invaluable to T2M-Eu when a religious fanatic’s bomb trapped dozens of people in the wreckage of a Monaco casino. Team Tomorrow keeps Firefly on retainer and calls her in whenever the situation requires her particular skills. There are between four and nine floating T2M agents at any given time.

The Arenas

T2M has four main headquarters thoughtfully located throughout the world. The Central Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, houses the main administration of Team Tomorrow. Caestus Pax, Director of T2M Central, has authority over the other three arena directors. He determines T2M policy in conjunction with a board of advisors from Utopia and Aeon.

Central Headquarters

Location: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Director: Caestus Pax

Nova Cell Leader: Caestus Pax

When Project Utopia officially completed the terraformation of Ethiopia in 2006, the Ethiopian government gratefully gifted them with a beautiful patch of land in the garden district of the city. Utopia commissioned Piotr Enrikssen, the nova architect, to design the Team Tomorrow Central Complex.



CHAPTER 3: TEAM TOMORROW

By that time, T2M had just celebrated its seventh anniversary and had performed hundreds of invaluable services to the globe and humankind. The new building in Addis Ababa honors the heroic novas of Team Tomorrow. Appropriately, a statue of Atlas holding the world on his shoulders stands outside in the main plaza. The African sun glints off its gold contours and dazzles the eye.

The T2M building occupies only one small section of the entire, sprawling gardens. Eight stories, with six above-ground and three below, Enrikssen designed it without a single right angle on any of the walls, it houses the novas of Team Tomorrow Central, the orientation college and the main offices of Director Caestus Pax.

Wedding Announcement

On this day, two shall be united as one and the world will become just a little more perfect.

Makara and FireFox invite you to join the celebration of their marriage.

June 16, 2008

Garden of Eden

Team Tomorrow Central Headquarters

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Forwarded Newsgroup Message

**From NovaWatch!, <http://ops.novawatch!12.com.vtml>
"Chatroom: Discussion: Makara-FireFox Wedding"**

Message: "Marriage?"

Board: Discussion: Makara-FireFox Wedding

Posted: blinders

Date: May 2, 2008 at 15:22 PM

Pritchett wrote:

>Have they lost their bloody minds over there? Letting two nova agents get married? And on
>T2M grounds as well? Can you say, "security risk?" I would assume Pax knows about this,
> but for God's sake, I can't believe he's letting it happen.

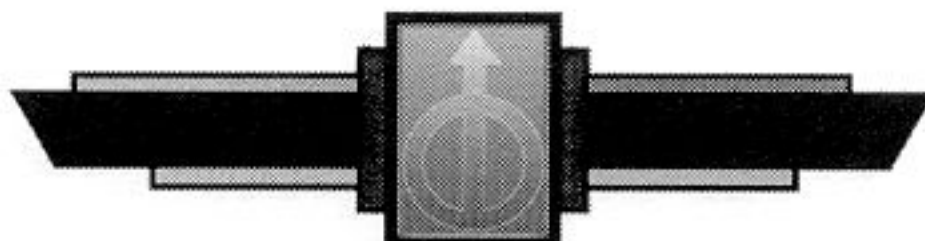
I hear you, Pritch. I don't get it either. They must have it under control. I figure Pax /had/ to put his stamp of approval on it, or it wouldn't be happening on their grounds. Hell, maybe he figures it'll make a good PR stunt. I know the press are coming. My brother-in-law's a reporter for the Washington Post and he says everyone is trying to wiggle their way into covering it.

Really, the marriage shouldn't come as any big surprise. Hell, they've been screwing each other for awhile now, running off on romantic weekends and crap like that. I read about it in Playboy. They had picture of the two of them naked on a beach in the Caribbean somewhere.

My personal theory is that Pax is hoping that if they're living together, in a house with a white-picket fence, they'll chill out a little. You know. At some point, the honeymoon is over.

<shrug> I guess we'll see, huh? Toodles. Heh.

Buddy





TEAM TOMORROW ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

CENTRAL (Addis Ababa):

Caestus Pax, Director
Central Core Cell—nova team
Dept. of Administration
Dept. of Public-relations
Dept. of Transportation
Dept. of Intelligence Services
Dept. of Munitions
Dept. of Housing
Dept. of Health and Recreation

AMERICAS (Mexico City):

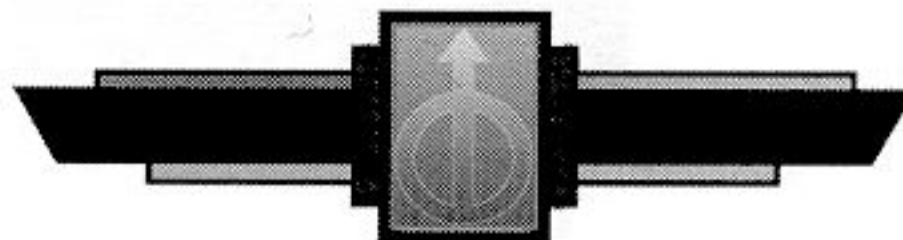
William F. Reed, Director
Americas Core Cell—nova team
Dept. of Administration
Dept. of Public-relations
Dept. of Transportation
Dept. of Intelligence Services
Dept. of Munitions
Dept. of Housing
Dept. of Health and Recreation

EUROPE (Venice):

Marta Csepregi, Director
Europe Core Cell—nova team
Dept. of Administration
Dept. of Public-relations
Dept. of Transportation
Dept. of Intelligence Services
Dept. of Munitions
Dept. of Housing
Dept. of Health and Recreation

ASIA/PACIFIC (Talaud Island):

Gerald London, Director
Asia Core Cell—nova team
Dept. of Administration
Dept. of Public-relations
Dept. of Transportation
Dept. of Intelligence Services
Dept. of Munitions
Dept. of Housing
Dept. of Health and Recreation



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terview

N! Interview for their series "N! Up-to-Date," aired February 24, 2008

N! correspondent Janetta Johnson: I have to admit that you two make an absolutely adorable couple.

Firefox: Oh! That's so sweet. Thank you. We're so happy. I can't even begin to express how much. Makara is my dream man.

Makara: And Firefox is my fantasy.

Firefox: <laughing> Honey, I'm *not* going to wear that French maid's outfit, I don't care what you say.

JJ: Well. That brings some interesting images.

Makara: Doesn't it?

JJ: But, I wanted to ask you about your move to Mexico City.

Firefox: Sweetheart, do you mind if I answer this? No? Good. Janetta, I have to tell you, everyone at Team Tomorrow and Utopia has been so good to us. Pax — that's Caestus Pax, the director of Team Tomorrow — presented us with this adorable little house only a couple miles from the T2M headquarters in Mexico City. He's transferring Makara there, because the team there isn't quite as busy as Central and with Jennifer gone and all... Isn't that so sweet of him? You should see the house. It's beautiful. Makara and I want to raise our kids there.

JJ: Kids? Is there something you'd like to announce to our listeners?

Makara: Hell no! Not yet anyway. We're not even married yet. But kids are number one on our agenda. We want to have a whole dozen of them. Firefox will make a wonderful mother.

JJ: I'm sure she will. Tell me, Firefox, do you ever doubt your decision to take a semi-permanent leave of absence from Team Tomorrow?

Firefox: Oh sure. I wonder all the time if I'm making the right choice. But you know what? I realized that the most important thing to me was my future husband and our life together. I want to take the time off from saving lives and fighting wars to make a good home for him. <to Makara> I love you, honey.

Makara: I love you too, babe.



CHAPTER 3: TEAM TOMORROW

Case-file #: T2M-011508-DM0101

Arena: Central

Author: Dominic-Luís Montrapos

Author's Title: Head of Intelligence Services

Subject: IMMEDIATE RESPONSE: Bizerte Earthquake

Urgency Level: Immediate response

Minimum Security Rating: Delta

Overview:

At 07:45 a.m. local time, in the region of Bizerte, northern Tunisia, an earthquake measuring a magnitude of 8.0 caused serious damage to the city of Tunis and surrounding areas. The earthquake centered near Lake Bizerte, located about 60 kilometers from the capital city of Tunis. Aftershocks compounded the damage and threat to life. The town of Menzel Bourguiba also experienced tremors and has reported damage and injuries.

Preliminary investigation shows no sign of nova involvement. Until we receive further investigation from on-site, Intelligence Services considers the earthquake a natural event. Note, however, that Tunisia has never before been seismically active, so caution and attention to suspicious circumstances are advised.

Approach Recommendation:

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE. At 08:00 a.m., the alarms sounded and operatives met in the briefing room. By 08:30, helicopters airlifted the earthquake-response team (see attachment T2M-011508-DM0101-A for a list of agents involved). At 09:22, the team arrived. Radio reports from the site indicate that the team has made contact with local emergency crews and has begun to coordinate rescue and clean-up strategies (see attachment T2M-011508-DM0101-B for partial transcription of radio transmission).

We recommend the agents follow standard operating procedure for geological disasters until the crisis has been contained. Once the danger to life and property has passed, the team will pursue a causal investigation to confirm that the event was indeed natural and not nova-induced.

Asia/Pacific Headquarters

Location: Talaud Island, Indonesia

Director: Gerald London

Cell Leader: Pratima "Splash" Basham

In August 2003, Utopia purchased a parcel of land on Talaud Island. Located north of Sulawesi, Talaud and its sister island Sangihe form stepping-stones from Indonesia to the Philippines. Talaud Island has magnificent coral gardens and virgin-white beaches, a volcano and mountainous terrain. For decades, SCUBA enthusiasts have come to the area to see a multitude of tropical marine life and coral reefs, as well as the ruins of the ancient Mokodompis kingdom.

The T2M complex stands at the base of a live volcano in a grove of coconut trees. As a matter of fact, the area has a larger concentration of coconut trees than anywhere in Indonesia. The one-story buildings, of which there are 12, sit low to the ground, half-buried below the surface. Piotr Enrikssen wanted the buildings to blend with their surroundings and created an artistic marvel by combining the architectural styles of the native tribes with modern convenience.

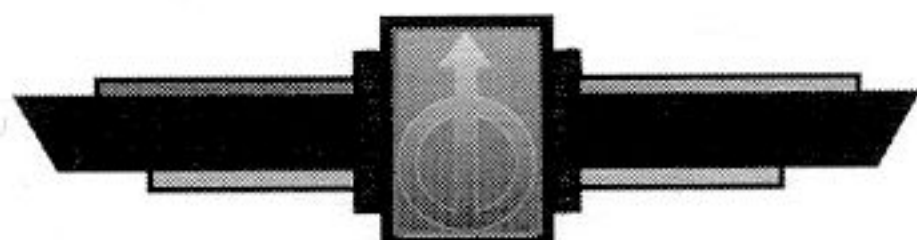
From *Humanity Magazine*, volume 1, issue 4, January 2008

The Day the Coconuts Fell Without a Sound

by Gwan Myung-sun

A ripple of excitement moved through us as we climbed on the bus at Talaud Airport and skirted the azure sea on our way to Team Tomorrow's Asian Complex. The people of Talaud Island had welcomed us with toothy-white smiles, bringing a sense of hope to the Humanity group that had come to protest civilian deaths in the T2M-Nakato Conflict last month. Little did we know that, over the next eight hours, we would have our hopes completely dashed.

The bus carried all 15 of us through a tropical paradise lit with golden sunshine. The beaches we passed dazzled us, brilliant and white. Long before we arrived, we could see the billowy smoke from the volcano traveling up and away on the wind. The T2M buildings appeared abruptly through a copse of coconut trees and took our breath away with their beauty. Surely those who lived in such a magnificent testimony to the Indonesian heritage would understand our plight and hear our pleas.



Gravel colored with bits of coral crunched beneath our feet as we emerged from the bus and stepped up, *en masse*, to the front gates. Security guards greeted us with smiles and asked our business. Thinking we had nothing to hide, we told them we wished to speak with someone regarding an injustice to the people of the world. The guards ushered us around back and down some stairs into an interior waiting room. With more smiles and polite words, they explained to us that we had to follow certain protocol. They served us drinks and, for the next three hours, we underwent a series of interviews and metal detectors and had our passports checked numerous times. We understood the need for security and persisted, patient and sure that at the end of it all, we would be making a difference.

The waiting room had extremely cold air-conditioning. Once we had completed the security checks, we waited, milling around the room and sitting on rattan chairs. We discussed what we would say. An hour passed, then another. The sun shone in through the windows, heating the room to an unbearable temperature, but still we waited patiently. Several hours later, finally, someone came to hear us. He said his name was Shang Hou and that he was a public-relations officer. He smiled a lot. He insisted on shaking all our hands, then took a seat to hear

our concerns. We explained our position, described our outrage at the civilian deaths that resulted from the T2M raid on the Nakato warehouse. He listened and we thought he seemed concerned.

Finally, when all was said, Shang Hou rose, apologized for any "inconvenience" to the families of those killed and thanked us for coming. He excused himself and security ushered us back to our bus. We left with heavy heads and no sense of accomplishment. We felt only an anti-climactic emptiness. That day, the ripe coconuts of our hearts fell, but did anyone hear them?

Dictation of letter to Mr. and Mrs. Itzak Goldberg

Nishi, begin letter to Mr. and Mrs. Itzak Goldberg, parents of Hiram "Slag" Goldberg. The address is in the files. They're old and their English isn't great. Translate into Yiddish. Dear Mr. and Mrs. Goldberg. It is with deepest regret that I write to share my sympathies for the death of your son. Period. As the director of Team Tomorrow, I worked closely with Hiram on numerous occasions. Period. I admired and respected him. Period. He was everything that Team Tomorrow wanted.... No. Nix that last sentence. Replace with: He embodied all the best

Case-file #: T2M-020308-TP0019

Arena: Asia

Author: Thanorm Prakarnchai

Author's Title: Executive Assistant to the Director

Subject: Heaven Thunder Triad Activities in North Vietnam

Urgency Level: Non-urgent

Minimum Security Rating: Beta

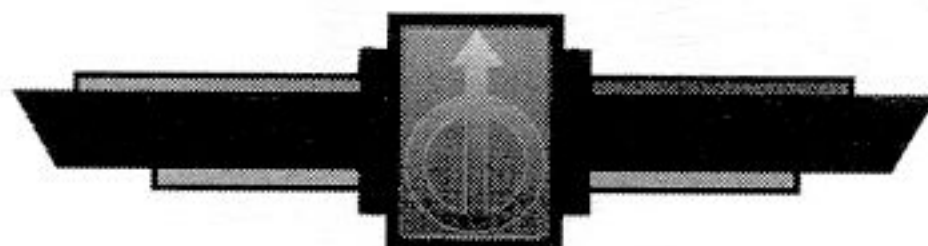
Overview:

Reports (see attachment T2M-020308-TP0019-A) indicate a substantial financial transaction between agents of the Heaven Thunder Triad and highland farmers in North Vietnam. All facts point to HTT subsidization of opium poppy cultivation in the region. HTT appears to be expanding their operations by paying the start-up costs and providing education for N. Vietnamese farmers willing to changeover their crops.

Intelligence Services has prepared a list of potential offenders (see attachment T2M-020308-TP0019-B) and a map showing their locations (see attachment T2M-020308-TP0019-C) that the investigating agent can use.

Approach Recommendation:

This office recommends that an agent begin immediate surveillance on the farms listed. Once the operative has confirmed the reports, the operative will counsel the farmers on more productive farming methods, using whatever means necessary to persuade them. Once accomplished, continued surveillance will establish the sincerity of the farmers and should they falter in their responsibilities to international law, a team will destroy their contraband crops and will arrest the criminals involved.



CHAPTER 3: TEAM TOMORROW



qualities for which Team Tomorrow stands. Period. He gave his life in service to the globe, to humanity and to the future of our children. Period. Because of him, the world is a better place. Period. You, I'm sure, are very proud.... No. Change that to: extremely proud. Period. Just as we here at Utopia and Team Tomorrow are proud to have had the opportunity to get to know Hiram and to work with him. Period. He leaves behind an empty space that no one will ever fill. Period. We will miss him. Period. New paragraph. You will by now have received the insurance papers. Period. I hope that all is in order. Period. Please contact my offices if there is anything I or my staff can do for you. Period. Sincerely, Caestus Pax. Nishi, get this typed up before you do the others on this tape and I'll sign it today. I want it sent out as soon as possible. New letter. Begin letter to...

Geisha

From *Playboy*, June 2008

by Matthew J. Bristol

In Paris, in the spring, the world comes alive with activity, greenery and flowers. I couldn't have chosen a better place or time to fall in love. My palms were sweaty and my heart pounding as I approached the hotel suite where I knew Geisha awaited me. She answered the door herself, dressed in a flowing silk dress of the palest yellow. An angel trapped in our earthly realm, she completely eclipsed her surroundings. As we settled down for the interview, however, I quickly realized that Geisha had much more to offer than just a heavenly figure, ebon hair and doe's eyes.

Geisha won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007 for her mediation of the Aegean Peace Accord. With gentle bearing and soft-spoken words, Geisha brought the leaders of Greece and Turkey to a middle ground. Together, the three of them worked out a mutually acceptable agreement regarding mentorship of the splintered Balkan states. The world credits her with averting another major military conflict in the region.

In describing how she got the two hot-blooded leaders to agree, she replied with a quiet laugh, "Oh, Matthew. I didn't do anything that any other reasonable per-

son hasn't fantasized about doing with the leaders of countries in turmoil. I sat them both down and simply reminded them that we were all mature adults." She smiled with a certain tenderness and added, "They're both very nice men who want to do the right thing. Sometimes you just have to remind government leaders that it's okay to compromise. They forget, especially when they're feeling so much responsibility to their own people. They're like loving, protective fathers who would go to any means to take care of their children. All I do is remind them that they're still just men, alive, with their own needs and desires. I bring them back to reality, in a way."

I think that's the moment when I fell in love with Geisha and my situation worsened as the interview progressed. I yearned to ask her about her involvement in the upcoming Kashmir Talks. She replied with naked honesty....

Europe Headquarters

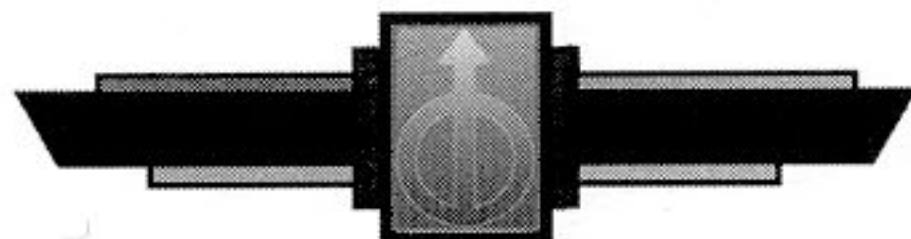
Location: Venice, Italy

Director: Marta Csepregi

Cell Leader: Thorn

In 2007, Addis Ababa became home to Team Tomorrow's primary base of operations and the European division separated off and remained. The T2M-Eu HQ is located on the Canalazzo (Grand Canal) in a series of three, renovated cassas built in the late 18th century. The buildings present a beautiful, continuous face to the canal, connected by covered walkways. Nestled amidst the snaking, cobblestone alleys of Venice, the complex keeps its promise not to detract from either the history or the mystique of the city. Because Utopia chose to renovate the manor houses rather than build anew, it managed to niche the headquarters in with unobtrusive grace.

At first glance, the buildings have an old-world charm that contradicts Utopia's high-tech image. In truth, however, the gothic facades and baroque lobby cleverly camouflage very modern facilities. Offices and briefing rooms hide behind elaborate doors of carved wood. The European agents of Team Tomorrow live within the headquarters' walls and travel, just like everyone else, via gondolas on the canals; Venice allows no motor vehicles on the island.





Official Utopia/Team Tomorrow Press Release

From: Offices of Marta Csepregi, Team Tomorrow European Headquarters, Venice, Italy

Contact: Hans Kleitzman, Public-relations Representative, PR Department, T2M Europe, Venice, Italy

Re: Hostage situation in Amsterdam, Netherlands, May 10, 2008

The following is a transcribed radio transmission involving Thorn, a T2M-Eu agent dispatched to the scene of the hostile takeover of the Romanian embassy in Amsterdam on May 10, 2008.

Thorn: HQ, this place is chaotic. Looks like the local authorities have their hands full. I'm skirting around behind the building to get a look. What's that? HQ, my sniffer says she's picking up the scent of quantum. I thought you said this was a standard op? We've got nova involvement. Confirmed. Repeat, I've got visual confirmation of nova involvement. No one I recognize.

HQ: Give full description. Over.

LG: Tall, dark hair, mustache. Greenish tint to the skin. Looks Hispanic or Arabic from here, but it's too distant to confirm that. Shit. HQ, all hell is breaking loose here. They're killing hostages. They just threw one out the window, charred and smoking. We're moving in.

HQ: Proceed with extreme caution. Over.

LG: Oh, believe me. We will. Entering the building now. Figment has gone into stealth mode. She'll be in place by the time I get there. Stairs are clear. Found the back door. [Crash!]

From N! newsflash, aired on May 10, 2008

In Amsterdam today, terrorists took over the Romanian embassy and killed three people, including the Romanian ambassador. A Team Tomorrow assault ended the reign of terror and succeeded in freeing the hostages without further death. T2M leader Thorn was injured in the fray and airlifted to the Rashoud Medical Lab in London, England. He remains in serious condition this evening. N! joins the world in wishing him a speedy recovery.

CHAPTER 3: TEAM TOMORROW



Case-file #: T2M-033008-SS0287

Arena: Europe

Author: Sara Stefano

Author's Title: Case Reviewer, Class A

Subject: Balkan Reconstruction

Urgency Level: Important

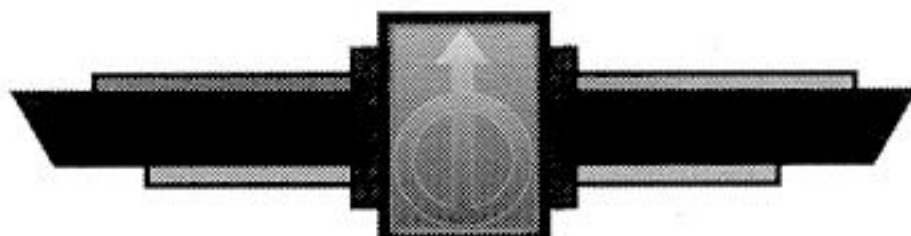
Minimum Security Rating: Beta

Overview:

A rash of attacks against Serbs, Albanians, Turks and UN teams overseeing the post-war reconstruction in Yugoslavia would indicate subversive activities by Radocanian guerrillas. Officials report more than two dozen shooting deaths and several people missing. These attacks have set back the reconstruction efforts of UN teams as they turn their attention to defense. The guerrillas hit at night. Local military and police personnel have set up night watches, but somehow the guerrillas continue to bypass them. I suspect nova involvement, possibly elites. See Serbia historical documentation (attachment T2M-033008-SS0287-A) which indicates a long record of unrest in the area.

Approach Recommendation:

Due to the history of conflict in this region, I recommend that we attach an operative there until we have rendered all of Radocani's supporters powerless. Considering the implication of nova involvement, I suggest a T2M nova with quantum-detecting abilities. Furthermore, I believe we should pull a team of agents from the ongoing, less-urgent diplomatic mission in northern Ireland. This team should approach the Balkan situation with extreme prejudice against the war criminals and terrorists, so that we can finally put an end to this. Historically, the Balkan region has flared up again and again. This goes against Utopia's and the United Nations' plans for the future of the area and we should give cauterization of the situation a high priority.



Americas Headquarters

Location: Mexico City, Mexico

Director: William F. Reed

Cell Leader: Ricardo Montoya-Bernal

Crews completed construction on the Mexico City T2M complex in January of 2002. At the same time, they finished the newly renovated, Central HQ in Venice, Italy. T2M left New York and split into two parts, each team covering one half of the world. This established the Mexico City HQ as an important base for T2M activities. The director, William F. Reed, worked closely with Caestus Pax to develop a working model for expanding the Team Tomorrow operations and that model became the foundation for the future split into four arenas.

Located on the outskirts of Mexico City, the sprawling T2M complex has grown into a self-sufficient base of operations that includes housing, training facilities, administrative offices and all other support functions. The hacienda-style buildings of the T2M-Americas headquarters took their architectural design from the Spanish, including central courtyards and scalloped gables. Billowy, fragrant gardens redolent of orange blossoms and jasmine cover the grounds, divided by stone paths that connect the myriad buildings.

From "Endangered Seals Facing Diesel Spill," *Le Monde*, February 28, 2008

KAUAI, Hawaii (AP) — A grounded boat broke up off the coast of Kauai on the morning of February 28, 2008. Its hull split and it spilled more than 16,000 gallons of diesel fuel into waters inhabited by endangered Hawaiian monk seals and sea turtles. The seals remain the second-most endangered mammal in American waters, after the northern right whale. Only about 1,300 of the creatures still exist in the world, despite efforts to breed more.

Team Tomorrow Americas sent Geyser in to help with clean up, despite the presence of United-States-directed novas, claiming that the endangerment to the animals made this an international affair and not just an American problem. Geyser met with the United States team and they worked together to contain the spill and siphon it away without any harm to either the beaches or the wildlife. This marks, perhaps, one of the most successful cooperative efforts in several years between a T2M and the United States government. At the press conference following the operation, all the novas involved....

Memo — Top Secret

(decoded 43695-HA)

To: William F. Reed, Director, T2M Americas

From: Caestus Pax, Director, T2M

Date: 5/30/08

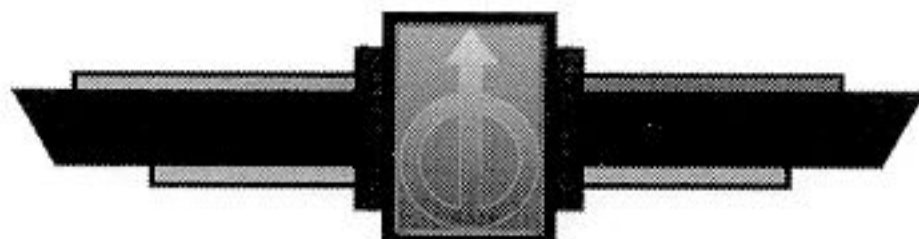
Re: QNA Demonstration

Reed, what the hell is going on over there? A T2M agent has no business getting involved in political or social issues. You will *immediately* remind them that they represent Team Tomorrow and that they do not have the authority to use their T2M status to further their own agendas without getting prior approval through the proper channels.

The last thing we need is for the right wing fanatics to find even more fodder to oppose us. Get these agents out on assignment. Split them up. Send Ana down to Colombia for that coke ring (see case-file T2M-052508-PR0066, attached). She's been with the Team long enough to know better. And if Guggie's going to be over there every time Marta gives her time off, consider her part of T2M-Am while she's there. Send her up to Ontario (see case-file T2M-051808-QM0002, attached).

You let this kind of thing continue and your agents will start thinking they have rights.

Pax



CHAPTER 3: TEAM TOMORROW

Case-file #: T2M-122807-WFR0054

Arena: Americas**Author:** William F. Reed**Author's Title:** Director, T2M-Americas**Subject:** Inti, berserk nova**Urgency Level:** Urgent**Minimum Security Rating:** Alpha**Overview:**

Several months ago, reports of strange lights flashing in the mountains of Peru led us to an investigation of the area. Through subtle surveillance, we have managed to discover a rather disturbing situation. A nova who calls himself Inti, after the Incan sun god, has established a community of locals in the ruins of Machu Picchu. By questioning residents of the area, we found that Inti has killed numerous outsiders who attempted to climb to the ruins and at least one unexplained accident has befallen a tourist helicopter flying overhead. So far, we believe that Inti has caused at least eight deaths (see attachment T2M-122807-KLJ0054-A for prior investigative reports).

Through our reconnaissance, we have learned that Inti has convinced the unsophisticated locals, mostly descendants of the Incas, that he is their god and has returned to lead them back to greatness. He has cloistered many young women, all virgins, in an area of the ruins and has called for parents to give their virgin daughters to him in exchange for his "mercy." We believe that he has already had at least one of these young women killed for trying to escape. Considering the theories on Incan history (see attachment T2M-122807-KLJ0054-B) which state that the priests of the Incas sacrificed young virgins to their sun god, I believe that our concerns about Inti's intentions are not unfounded.

Approach Recommendation:

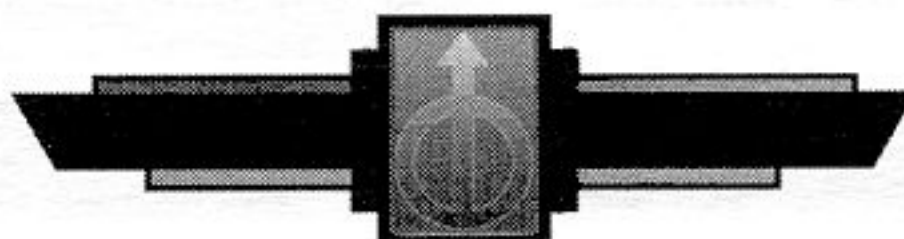
The Office of Intelligence Services, T2M-Americas, believes that we should eliminate the threat posed by Inti immediately and scatter his followers. He obviously has become tainted and has lost his sanity, though it's possible he could simply have fallen to what has come to be called "The India Syndrome." He should be considered extremely dangerous and approached with caution. If captured, he should be remanded into the custody of the Nova Evaluation Center at Bahrain. This office recommends he be handled with extreme prejudice.

A reminder, however, is in order: He resides amidst ancient ruins and all care should be taken to keep those ruins intact. If the responding agents (see attachment T2M-122807-KLJ0054-C for suggested list of agents and strategies) cannot contain him or draw him away from the ruins, then he should be taken out with the most surgical strike possible.

India Syndrome

In May of 2002, The Economist coined the term "The India Syndrome" to describe the tendency of novas in third world or relatively unsophisticated cultures to be worshipped as gods. The term specifically refers to those novas who encourage this behavior toward themselves and resist intervention. India has an abundance of the three components that lead to the Syndrome: a large nova population, many uneducated or unmodernized communities and a strong spiritual bent. Some of Team Tomorrow's most violent and least well-resolved missions have been interventions in communities with nova "gods." The community does not want to lose their "god" and the "god" does not want to give up the power granted to him or her by the community.

None of these interventions has ever ended well, and Team Tomorrow has stopped performing them until the phenomenon itself and the long term consequences of intervention can be studied in greater depth. In the meantime, several hundred "gods" continue to rule over their tribes and villages in isolated communities around the globe.



CHAPTER 4:

EXTERNAL

RELATIONS

Project Utopia wields enormous influence and global power in many spheres. Its missions, discoveries, products and employees touch almost every person on the planet in one way or another. All of this makes Project Utopia a “big man on planet,” so to speak, and forces other powers to deal with it in one way or another. Some groups, such as the United Nations, are allies; some, like the Teragen, are enemies; others are merely neutral or watchful.

The United Nations

Founded in the wake of World War II in the hopes of preventing future wars by bringing the nations of the world together in a peaceful forum to resolve their differences, the United Nations has never truly lived up to the promise of its early days. Tied up in bureaucracy, hamstrung by rules that frequently prevent it from accomplishing anything meaningful, and often bloated with overspending and corruption, The UN was, to many people around the world, a joke.

That changed when novas entered the arena. Just as the energies of the Mazarin-Rashoud node empower a nova, something about this particular crisis spurred the United Nations to take concrete, constructive action. Concerned about the potential threat the nova phenomenon posed, all members of the Security Council agreed to investigate the matter and “take appropriate steps” to address the situation.

The UN’s preliminary investigation, although it proceeded with uncharacteristic vigor, was not yet complete when the Aeon Society, which had worked with various branches of the United Nations for years on many charitable projects, approached the Security Council with the idea of Project Utopia. Although each permanent member of the Council wanted to exploit the nova situation for its own gain, they recognized that without some central “authority” to cope with the problem, the result would likely be a large number of quantum-powered renegades running around doing as they pleased. Thus, partly out of fear and partly out of inertia, the Security Council agreed to invest Project Utopia, a private corporation owned by the Aeon Society, with broad responsibilities for the “nova situa-

tion.” Many of them have since expressed regrets about that decision — privately, of course.

Since its initial founding, Project Utopia’s ties with the United Nations have only grown stronger. Through clever media manipulation and the skillful handling of crises, Project Utopia became identified in the world’s mind as the only “good guy” that could handle novas properly. This, as much as any acquiescence on the part of the United Nations, gave it power — power that it leveraged to gain further responsibilities, obtain donations and bring more novas into its fold. Profits earned from businesses based, at least in part, on its knowledge of nova abilities further increased that power.

Joining the Club

In 2007, Project Utopia took the ultimate step to cement its relationship with the United Nations. By agreeing to settle the five permanent Security Council members’ debts to the United Nations — a sum totaling just over \$2.6 billion — Project Utopia bought itself a permanent “advisory” seat on the Council. No country had obtained a permanent seat on the Council since the founding of the United Nations, but Project Utopia was able to do so. In part, this was recognition for the enormous impact that novas had had on society since 1998, and a desire to keep employing that power for noble and constructive ends, but it also reflected Utopia’s political and economic clout. In the end, the position was just an acknowledgement of the realities of the situation, since the Council would have consulted with Project Utopia on most serious matters anyway.

Scandal and Beyond

In the wake of the Slider scandal and attendant difficulties that Project Utopia now faces, some members of the United Nations sense a weakness that they may be able to exploit. The hope, of course, would be to mitigate Project Utopia and reduce it to a wing of the United Nations. The country in the best position to accomplish this is the United States, but so far it seems to be taking only a mildly negative stance toward Utopia, watching and waiting to see how things develop over the coming weeks and months.

Despite the scandals and allegations of corruption, Project Utopia remains strong, as does its relationship with the United Nations. Together, the two of

them have transformed a filthy planet into a relative ecological paradise, set man on his first solid steps toward the stars, and kept the peace in regions once eternally torn by conflict — and most people won't easily forget that. It will take a great deal more than a handful of (as-yet unproven) reports of corruption to derail this train.

From *International Politics*, 4th Ed., 2007, a textbook:

The Basics of the United Nations

The United Nations is an international legislative body containing 186 members as of the writing of this text; this includes most of the nations of the world (Switzerland is one well-known non-member). It is composed of six bodies: the General Assembly; the Security Council; the Economic and Social Council; the International Court of Justice; the Trusteeship Council; and the Secretariat.

The main body of the United Nations is the General Assembly, a legislature to which all member nations belong. It meets once a year, typically from September to December (though special sessions may be invoked), and each member holds one vote. It divides its work into six broad committees, such as Disarmament and International Security, Humanitarian and Cultural, and Legal. Some of the organizations that fall under its control include the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and the relatively young United Nations Nova Committee (UNNOVAC). UNNOVAC has advisors and observers present at many Project Utopia missions and projects, but has no real authority over the Project at all.

The real power in the United Nations rests in the Security Council. It consists of 16 members: five permanent members (the United States, United Kingdom, France, the Confederation of Russian States, and China), one permanent advisory member (Project Utopia), and 10 temporary members elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms. The Council's primary job is to maintain world peace and security, but the fact that all five permanent members can veto any action by the Council often hampers its ability to accomplish anything worthwhile. The Council meets continuously, and has the power, if necessary, to call on member nations or Project Utopia to provide military forces for peacekeeping missions and similar operations. As of 2008, it is far more likely to call on Project Utopia for its peacekeeping troops or novas than to try to persuade the member nations to donate their own soldiers. Agencies of the Security Council include the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP, which monitors the situation in Kashmir and maintains the DMZ there), several similar agencies for other "hot spots" around the world,

and the Military Staff Committee that oversees all military interventions by the UN.

The Trusteeship Council, initially formed to administer UN trust territories, is now essentially defunct since all such territories have become independent nations.

The International Court of Justice, meeting in the Hague, Netherlands, is the United Nations' judicial system. It handles major cases brought under international law, and is composed of 15 independent judges, no two of whom may be from the same nation.

The Secretariat is the United Nations' administrative branch. Headed by the Secretary-General, who often acts as a spokesman for the organization and administers all meetings of the General Assembly and Security Council, it maintains many offices around the world.

Legal Authority

No law or treaty technically gives Project Utopia the legal authority to do much of what it does. No provision under international law, except a treaty signed by every nation on the planet, would constitute true legal authority for its actions. Project Utopia's authority instead derives from two things. First, the Security Council is willing to delegate responsibilities to it, the same way that a national government might "privatize" services it would ordinarily provide, such as trash pickup or schools. That gives Utopia the equivalent of the Council's legal authority under the United Nations Charter.

Secondly, its wealth of accomplishments gives it a certain legal authority born of complacency and inertia. Unlike the UN, or many member governments, Project Utopia can get things done. Most delegates to the General Assembly aren't fools; they know that the odds of the UN by itself transforming the Ethiopian desert or cleaning up the world's pollution are about the same as Caestus Pax putting on a dress and singing "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" during a live OpNet broadcast. Several nations voiced concerns about Project Utopia's power when it was first formed, and some continue to do so, but as long as the Project is perceived as benevolent, most nations are perfectly content to let it maintain its course and fix their problems for them. The Project's enormous popularity among the peoples of the world only make this decision an easier one for most politicians to reach.

Proteus

Project Proteus remains unknown to the United Nations or any member thereof. Revelation of its existence would be a major blow to the UN's confidence in Project Utopia, and might lead to a withdrawal of some of the authority given it, or a call for the establishment of oversight committees.

The Aeon Society

If Project Utopia is the United Nation's "teacher's pet," the Chicago-based Aeon Society is the Project's doting daddy. The Project is a private nonprofit corporation wholly owned by the Aeon Society, which itself is a private nonprofit corporation whose ownership and roots are deliberately kept enigmatic. Aeon created the Project in 1978, and has controlled it ever since.

One of the reasons for Project Utopia's success has been its association with the Aeon Society. As a charitable and philanthropic organization with a decades-long record of service to mankind behind it, the Aeon Society was able to "cast its aura" around Project Utopia, giving it a degree of respectability and public confidence it could not otherwise have had. Doors were opened for Aeon's child that other children couldn't even have approached.

As described in Chapter Two, although Project Utopia has its own "Board of Directors," it's basically an administrative body, and not an actual corporate board of directors. Project Utopia's true board of directors is made up of a number of high-ranking members of the Aeon Society who meet on an annual basis, as specified in Project Utopia's bylaws. Justin J. Laragione, the Director of Project Utopia attends these meetings in an advisory and reporting capacity, but is not himself a member of the Aeon board of directors. Because Project Utopia is a private corporation (meaning that its stock is not publicly owned or traded, but kept within the confines of a relatively small group of owners), the meetings of its board of directors are not public, and little information is known about who sits on the board, how it is organized, or how it works.

The Aeon Society must approve most major decisions of the Director or the departments of the Project — things like whether to send peacekeeping troops, whom to appoint to a Directorship within the organization, or whether to undertake a terraforming project. Typically Director Laragione relays a summary report of the desired action to certain officials of the Aeon Society, who consider the request. They may deny it, ask for a full report, or grant it, as they see fit; if necessary, they can call an emergency board of directors to discuss the situation.

After approving a particular project or mission, Aeon typically monitors the proceedings closely. Sometimes it sends field observers to make sure that the job is carried out successfully and in a way that reflects well on Utopia and Aeon both. All novas working on a project know who the observer is (even if other employees don't), and have instructions to protect him against any threat or harm.

The Aeon Society also helps to keep Project Utopia in the black with occasional infusions of cash. For the first few years, nearly all of Utopia's operating budget came from Aeon, but as it has developed its corporate subsidiaries and

other sources of income, the percentage of its funding derived directly from Aeon has shrunk drastically. Not all members of the Aeon Society are entirely happy about this; they feel it gives Project Utopia a measure of independence they do not wish it to have — even though the profits ultimately accrue to their own treasury for use in Aeon projects.

Despite the extremely close relationship between the two organizations, few people are really aware that Project Utopia is owned by Aeon. Aeon, for reasons of its own, prefers to downplay the fact that it controls the world's best known charitable organization, though it is widely known that it provides some of Utopia's financial support. However, the basic fact of the relationship is easy for anyone to look up, even if the particulars remain hidden by a veil of privacy.

From "Aeon Society Reports Records Donations," *Time Magazine*, February 2008

The Aeon Society, an 80-year-old worldwide charitable organization with ties to the United Nations and Project Utopia, reported that it received a record amount of donations in 2007. "Our records indicate that we received over \$50 million in donations from private citizens last year," said Damian Lombroso, a spokesman for the Aeon Society. "Of those, approximately 40 percent came from the United States, another 20 percent from Europe, and the remainder from the rest of the world." Aeon's announced figures do not include corporate donations, which private analysts estimate are at least equal to public giving.

Aeon's announcement follows on the heels of several similar announcements by other philanthropic groups that have seen an upswing in donations in recent years. "Across the board, giving to charity seems to have increased by at least 15% in most regions of the world," says Hillary Daumbert of the International Red Cross.

Proteus

The Aeon Society not only knows of the existence of Proteus, it is responsible for its creation. Once the Thetis Initiative crossed the desks of the board of directors of the Aeon Society, that body was insistent on the formation of Proteus despite Justin J. Laragione's oft-stated preference for letting Internal Affairs handle those issues which have been delegated to Proteus. Since the death of Slider, Laragione has been doing everything in his power to minimize the power of Proteus within Utopia, but the Aeon Society seems determined to fight him on the issue.

The Triton Foundation

One of the world's largest pharmaceutical companies, Triton began, as its name suggests, as a charitable

operation — specifically, as a company founded by one of Aeon's subsidiaries. However, before long it became large enough to spin off on its own, though it remains a private corporation whose stock is not publicly sold.

Unknown to the public at large, the Triton Foundation actually maintains very close ties to Project Utopia, especially its Science & Technology Department. Many of Triton's drug advancements in the past decade — cancer screenings and treatments, the HIV vaccine, and more — have directly resulted from studies of nova physiology and biochemistry performed by S&T and Triton scientists, often working closely together. While Triton claims merely to be "building on the vast body of research that came before us," in fact its successes derive from new, bleeding-edge research. Triton's officers prefer to keep this fact secret as a way of maintaining a competitive edge — other pharmaceutical companies cannot send up a hue and cry for access to Utopia's data and novas if they don't know Triton already has that.

Public records also reveal that the Triton Foundation is one of the largest corporate donors to both the Aeon Society and Project Utopia. When asked about this, Triton officials state merely that, "as a good corporate citizen of the world, the Triton Foundation feels obligated to donate to philanthropic causes."

Proteus

Triton's ties to Project Proteus are likewise substantial. The main Directors of Proteus, Thetis in particular

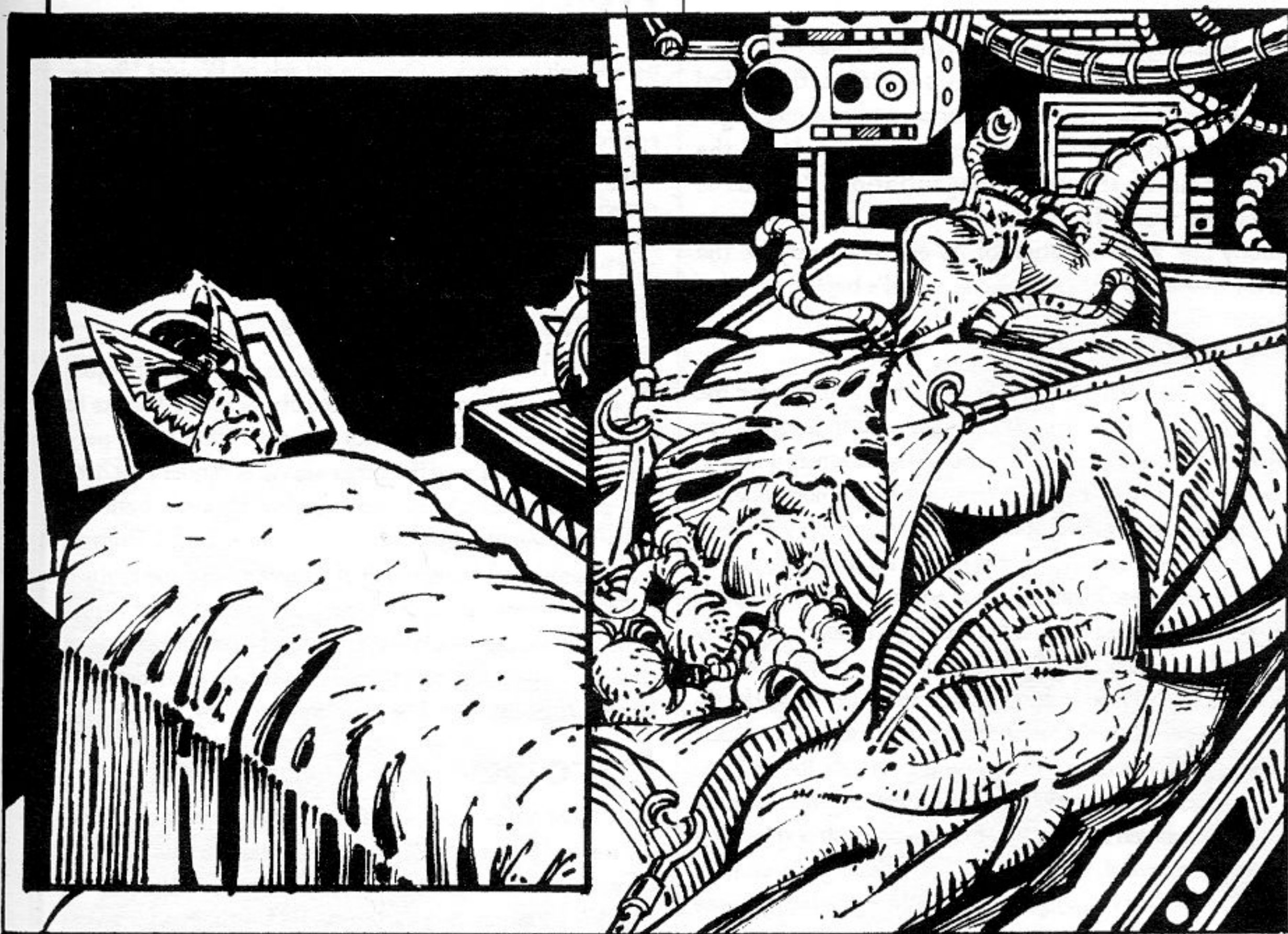
owns significant numbers of shares in Triton. Much of Triton's research on nova physiology has involved Proteus novas, many of whom have more... unusual... biochemistries (and appearances) than their more telegenic brethren. Triton's research is light-years ahead of where it would be if it had confined itself to ethical medical experimentation. This is readily apparent to anyone with a background in chemistry, biology, medicine, or pharmacology (such as anyone from the Chemistry & Pharmaceutical Sciences section of Utopia's Science & Technology Department) who examined certain Triton records and laboratory notes.

Nations of the World

Just because Project Utopia has a good relationship with the United Nations as a whole, doesn't mean that it gets along well with every member nation. While some (including most Third World nations, which benefit from its activities disproportionately) support it enthusiastically, others (such as many Western nations) are decidedly cooler towards it.

The United States

The United States is at the forefront of those nations that do not entirely trust Project Utopia. Guided, as ever, by public opinion polls, surveys, and letter-writing campaigns, America has bent in the prevailing wind of acclaim for Project



Utopia and not voted against it in the Security Council. Nor did it balk at allowing Utopia to pay off its UN debt just to formalize a *de facto* relationship. But, resentful of Utopia's diminishment of its own role on the world stage, and leery of so much power being in the hands of a mere private corporation, the United States has not sat back and blindly allowed Utopia to establish a monopoly on nova resources.

Since 1999, the United States has aggressively courted novas for its own military and intelligence apparatus, and its efforts have enjoyed a reasonable amount of success. Able to match Utopia's salary and benefits offers, the US has played the "patriotism" card to trump the Project's appeal based on "humanitarian works." Many American citizens who erupt end up joining the United States' Nova Development Program, a branch of the Department of the Army. The NDP — patterned, ironically enough, after Project Utopia's own recruitment and training programs — brings in newly erupted novas for testing and counseling, makes them a job offer, then slots them into the governmental career best suited to both their own desires and the needs of the government. Additionally, a number of non-Americans join the program because of its perk of allowing the enlistee's family to emigrate to the United States with automatic permanent citizenship.

Project Utopia continues to make its services available to the United States just like every other nation on Earth, but secretly views Washington with increasing suspicion. For now the two merely stare at each one another, restlessly wondering what the other is up to.

Proteus

Washington remains ignorant of Project Proteus. Were it to learn of the conspiracy's existence, the United States would immediately call for a complete investigation and purging of Project Utopia and, very likely, the dissolution of the entire organization. Proteus is America's worst fears of nova power abuse come to bloody life, and revelation of its existence may be the straw that breaks the American camel's back.

Japan

Japanese culture is wildly pro-nova, and thus for the most part wildly pro-Project Utopia as well. In Japan, novas are media icons, unparalleled corporate spokesmen, and even figures of worship, to the extent that many mental health officials are concerned about the phenomenon. But their admonishments seem lost of the bulk of the Japanese public.

On the other hand, Japanese government and business are decidedly less sanguine about the Project. Japan's economy and society depend heavily on technology, and to have outsiders monitoring and restricting its development of new forms for, and uses of, technology rankles like a slap in the face. Japan's government almost openly encourages the technological black marketers who try to outwit Utopia's Technological Regulation section, and the rumors of strong ties between government, business, and the Nakato *gumi* are true. The Powers That Be in Japan would be perfectly happy to see

Project Utopia vanish from the world scene altogether — though they'd settle for just having it stop poking its quantum-powered nose into their corporate laboratories.

Proteus

Tokyo's reaction to Project Proteus would be more or less the same as that of the United States. However, if it learned of Proteus secretly, rather than reveal the information to the world, it would probably use it as leverage to cut a deal to remove itself and its corporations from technological oversight.

China

As a much more closed society than either the United States or Japan, China and her citizens have had significantly less exposure to Project Utopia. Most novas who erupt in China are either rounded up by the authorities and indoctrinated into government sponsored programs, or manage to escape to a freer life in Hong Kong. The government clamps down on reports of novas, and, to a lesser extent, on entertainment featuring novas.

The Chinese government views Project Utopia with more suspicion than even the United States. They consider it a direct challenge to governmental authority, since Utopia seems to embody Western values more than Asian. China's squadrons of novas are enormous, and should the day come, the Chinese will have no qualms about falling on the Utopians hammer and tongs, justifying their actions by claiming to be protecting themselves from Utopian "aggression."

Proteus

Learning of the existence of Project Proteus might be enough to spark a Chinese attack on Project Utopia. At the very least, rather than use that information directly for its own benefit, like the Japanese would, the Chinese would delight in blowing Proteus' cover and then crowing about "Utopian hypocrisy."

The Russian Confederation

The Russian Confederation is, perhaps, Project Utopia's best friend on the Security Council. Thanks to the numerous public works projects Utopia has performed in Russia, and the other services rendered it over the past 10 years, it is convinced of Utopia's benevolence and worthiness of a seat on the Council. Russian citizens may not think much of Americans or the British, but they have nothing but good things to say of Project Utopia. Even the revelation of Project Proteus' existence probably could not dim their enthusiasm, provided that Utopia/Proteus spun the situation properly.

Europe

Most nations in Europe are, at the very least, amicably neutral towards Project Utopia. They're well aware of Utopia's (generally successful) efforts to ameliorate the Balkans situation, and very grateful for them, but never-

theless share some of the United States' anxiety regarding the concentration of nova power in the hands of a private entity. Knowledge of Project Proteus' existence would shake their confidence in Utopia considerably.

The Teragen Movement

As just about anyone who's been alive for the past few years can tell you, the aims and goals of Project Utopia and the Teragen terrorists (or "movement," as they prefer) are wildly divergent — one wants to harness nova powers for projects benefiting all humanity, the other sees each nova as a law unto him- or herself. By and large, the relationship is one of unmitigated animosity. Occasional conflicts between Team Tomorrow and various novas who claim association with Teragen have salted that general hatred with deep-seated personal grudges.

Still, the relationship between the two is not as black and white as N! would have the people of the world believe. Not every Terat is, in fact, a terrorist — most just want to be left alone to live their own lives, or do a few good deeds of their own as the mood strikes them. As for the Utopian novas, although none of them would care to even hint at the fact, more than one of them has some sneaking sympathy for the Teragen ideals. Many of them resent having to take orders or instructions from "zips," as they call them. They want to be given more leeway to do as they please, and don't think laws

and moral codes designed for humans fit them perfectly.

In the end analysis, the Utopian novas and Teragen novas are really two sides of the same thin coin. It wouldn't take much to flip that coin and turn the villains into the heroes — or *vice versa*.

The Directive

Project Utopia is perfectly aware that the Directive was created as a check against its "growing power and ambition," and sees it as a definite threat. That any other international organization (even one including just five members at present) would attempt to assemble a group of operatives organized along quasi-military lines has to be seen as a threat by them, despite the fact that Utopia does not view itself as posing any danger to world security, simply because it impairs Utopia's ability to accomplish its mission (by siphoning away nova resources).

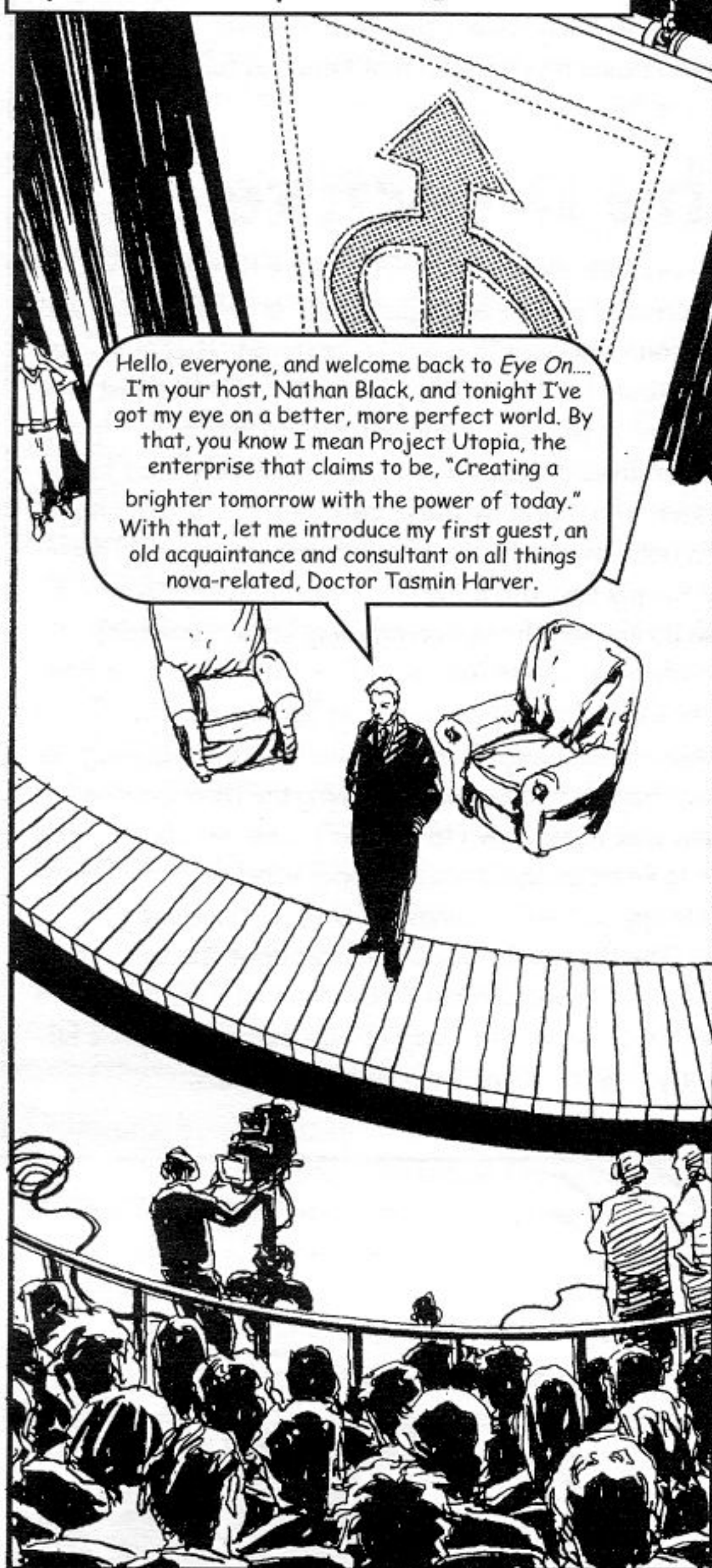
Project Proteus has taken steps to diminish or neutralize the threat posed by the Directive. Specifically, it has placed Proteus novas in deep cover within the Directive. These agents report back to Proteus on everything the Directive does or learns that filters down to them (Proteus has not yet been able to insert an agent into the upper echelons of the Directive to spy on their meetings, but they continue to try).

The Directive, meanwhile, has done the same thing to Utopia. Several recent nova recruits are Directive agents spying on the Project "on behalf of a free humanity," as the Directive's charter states.



Chapter 5: Project Proteus

[Excerpt from N! Broadcast:
Eye On... July 2008.]



Hello, everyone, and welcome back to *Eye On...* I'm your host, Nathan Black, and tonight I've got my eye on a better, more perfect world. By that, you know I mean Project Utopia, the enterprise that claims to be, "Creating a brighter tomorrow with the power of today." With that, let me introduce my first guest, an old acquaintance and consultant on all things nova-related, Doctor Tasmin Harver.



Good evening, Doctor Harver; congratulations on your induction into Project Utopia.

Thank you, Nathan. Congrats on your new show as well. I remember our first meeting when you were doing *The New Gods: Humanity's Next Step*.



As you say, Doctor.



Hey, call me Tasmin. And I don't know about that "all things nova-related" business.



Doctor, let's not fritter away bandwidth here. My audience — most of the civilized world, in fact — wants to know about one thing.



Ah, you mean qualifications for applying to Team Tomorrow. Well, like I told you on the phone, Nate, I mostly do consulting work for Project Utopia on matters of parapsysics. Only every now and then do I get to work with the T2M members—



No, that's not what I'm referring to, Doctor Harver.

"Tasmin," please Nate.

The world and I want to know about the underside of Project Utopia.

Underside? Nate, what are you—



Remember, we're live, Doctor Harver. Try not to answer my questions with questions. I invited you here because my viewers and I want to know a bit about this secret conspiracy within Project Utopia that we've been hearing whispers about.

You mean that tabloid stuff? It's just anti-Utopia propaganda, Nate.



Propaganda? Doctor Harver, weren't you the lead examiner at Jennifer "Slider" Landers' autopsy?



Well, I was there, but only in an advisory capacity. There were plenty of other parapsychicians on the case. I told you that on the phone. What's this about?

Exactly my question, Doctor. Just what role did you play in that investigation?



Nate, I was just an observer, really. If you want to know about this so-called conspiracy, you should be talking to one of Utopia's licensed PR rep's.



So you're saying there is a conspiracy?

No. I meant so they could officially deny—

Oh, I'm sure they would do just that, Doctor.



No, you know what I mean. What's gotten into you?



I've had my eye on you, Doctor Harver. *Ni*'s viewers all miss Slider, and they've got a few questions.

Let's take our first OpNet "Op-inion" now. Hello... galfrey07@stuntmail.com, you're on ViaSoft's direct-chat with Eye-On.... What's your question for the good doctor?

Theories

[posted to RantBack@global-net.com,
July 2008]

Dear Losers and Future Losers alike,

In the wake of the recent death of Jennifer Landers, people all over the world and all over the OpNet have started spouting all sorts of ridiculous conspiracy theories about the great, stamping juggernaut that is Project Utopia. I've gotten at least 50 OpNet hits here at work every day since the story broke, and believe me, the theories are many and varied. In fact, the plethora of, shall we say... *inspired* commentary on the subject has even motivated me to state one salient (and heretofore unexpressed) fact about this world in which we live. That fact is: OpNet access should be restricted to those who graduated university more handily than the average slack-jawed Pass/Fail proto-simian with a free OpNet-provider handle.

If I get one more "slider was killed by agnet pontius" letter, I'm going to go postal (look it up) and mail the lot of you a proto-Y2K bomb under a phony news server heading. I mean, if you can't even spell your conspiracy theory drivel correctly, you don't deserve the extra three percent mental-variation that makes you different from the chimpanzee. Let me lay out the facts once and for all, just to set this whole Project Utopia conspiracy mess to rest.

1.) No, Utopia did not murder Jennifer Landers. She was killed in Calcutta on assignment for Utopia by a nova who was most likely working for the Teragen. Evidence states that her attacker was someone she knew, but she knew plenty of people *outside* of Project Utopia.

2.) No, Utopia is not bogging down the investigation into who this nova was. Sometimes, murderers (especially those who claim high-profile victims) prefer to keep their heads low, which makes investigating their whereabouts proceed somewhat slowly.

3.) No, André Corbin is not an embattled patriot striving to keep one step ahead of some cloak-and-dagger circle of men in black. He's a loud-mouth, soccer-playing Scottish screw-off, who's likely incapable of murdering someone

like Slider, much less outwitting (or some would say masterminding) some conspiracy designed to make it seem as if he had.

4.) No, Utopia is not your next-door neighbor, your mailman, your uncle or that creepy guy at work who keeps looking at you funny. The folks running Project Utopia have better things to do than take covert pictures of you picking your nose and scratching your ass. They're not pulling any government strings, and they do not have the UN in their back pocket. Familiarity and intimacy (such as Project Utopia has won for itself) does not directly infer control. Ask your ex what that last part really means.

5.) No, Utopia did not blow up the *Galatea*. Jesus, people!

6.) No, everybody's favorite people, the novas, are not Utopia's secret army of *übermensch*, out to seize power in the name of *Baron von Pipedreamin*. I don't care how much money or influence you think you have, you ain't rich enough or connected enough to control seven *thousand* men and women who can fly, walk in space, shoot laser beams and throw space shuttles — accurately. Think about it; it just doesn't work that way.

Now, I know that about half of you are reading this and thinking, "Well, of course, Devon. I'm glad I'm not one of the wack-jobs you're preaching to." In fact, the only reason you're even bothering to read this is because you like that smug, peering-over-the-rim-of-your-glasses feeling you get when you agree with something a lot of people obviously don't. To those of you in that camp, I say, "Bravo. Now get on with your life and stop snuffing around reading this site (or watching *Two Minutes Hate*) like an opinion-sycophant."

Unfortunately, that says nothing for the rest of you. You're all the types who have nothing better to do than read this mess or watch XWF ("No, it's *real*, I tell you!" /sigh/), so there's really not much I can say to you except:

It's entirely possible that Utopia funds this site privately and I'm being paid under the table for saying all this.

Happy spook-hunting, losers.

— Devon Works (SliderFetish@unca.edu)

CHAPTER 5: PROJECT PROTEUS

What people don't know (or believe incorrectly that they do know) about Project Utopia is truly astounding. Reactions to the organization's broad range of influence (its connection to the UN, its relationship to the Teragen, the stake it has in the worldwide nova phenomenon) range from blasé resignation to open-hearted welcome to underground sentiments of paranoia. Recently, many people, mostly conspiracy theorists and those with a predilection toward anxiety, have started thinking twice about the seemingly benevolent Project Utopia. After all, many wonder, if such a public and up-front organization truly has something sinister to hide, how trustworthy can its public face really be?

And considering how pervasive Utopia already is, is it already too late to worry?

The information contained in this disk is intended for Count Raoul Orzaiz, General Thomas Dwayne Endicott and André Corbin.

If one of you is reading this, it means I've probably already been killed. That, or I'm the luckiest son of a bitch on Earth, and I'm sitting in the tropics right now with a Tom Collins in one hand, a blonde on the other arm and a smug smile on my face that says, "My buck has been passed." You have no idea what I went through to get this

information out of the complex, past security (human and greater-than) and into your hands, but frankly, you don't want to. Let's just say that my intestinal fortitude has never had such a rigorous workout, and I would rather not put the case to this microdisk in my mouth if I were you.

In any event, if the three of you are not staring across some dramatically small table in a dimly lit private booth in back of the Amp Room reading this together, I urge you to disseminate this information among the others addressed above as quickly and *discreetly* as possible. If the three of you know each other (and why you are all included herein), all the better; if not, you soon will. If the three of you don't know who I am, I only urge you to read on. A person in my position learns things some would deem best kept locked away, but I am not one who can abide by keeping certain information secret. Not information like this. But so as not to cause a panic, let me just say that what you are about to read will change how you see Project Utopia. Be it for better or worse, this microdisk contains information that you *must* know, because I think you can use it to make a difference in the way Project Utopia does things. Read the attached files, read my notes, take from them what you will, but believe that every piece of information is true.

Memo

To: Dr. Aaron Richards; Aeon Society

Date: March 18, 1981

RE: Your Interference.

Doctor Richards:

I must confess a certain hesitancy to reply to your letter of inquiry dated Monday of last week. It disturbs me no small amount to find that you have not only somehow been made privy to what I had assumed was a private letter to the Governor of this state, but that you seem to have thwarted the efforts I put forth in that same letter. You can only imagine my concern, Doctor, when I discovered that my advice to Governor Harris — as well as many of my congressional representatives — to declare a state of medical emergency based on the findings of one of my co-workers had gone unheeded at both the state and federal level. You must realize that I was only more shocked to hear that you or someone in your "Society" had gone behind my back and stopped the attempt without ever having read mine or my colleague's report on the subject.

What I want to know, Doctor Richards, is what you then hoped to gain by asking — *demanding*, even — that the subject of my colleague's study be transported to your private facility in New Jersey, with no explanation as to why or of your authority in so demanding. I'm sorry, Doctor Richards, but until we discover the source of the radiation (be it earthly, cosmic, domestic or foreign) that has warped and mutated my colleague's patient so radically, I feel it constitutes a danger of epidemic proportion to transport him from my own laboratories in Atlanta.

In lieu of a federal order to do otherwise, I will maintain the quarantine on a local level via my own staff until local authorities are able to gather any evidence as to exactly what we're dealing with.

Director David Scondras

Center for Disease Control; Atlanta, Georgia



General News Release

[Taken from the Gary, Indiana *Local Herald*, December 9, 1964.]

Railroad Crossing Disaster Miraculously Averted

Associated Press

GARY, IN

A near-disastrous locomotive accident occurred Sunday when area farmer Bill Hollingsworth's flatbed truck rolled into the back of area youth Jason Lewis' vehicle that had stopped at a railroad crossing, pushing both vehicles into the path of an oncoming train. However, despite the dire circumstances, no one was harmed in the accident.

"I heard the pop when my brakes went," Hollingsworth told reporters and police officers who arrived on the scene shortly, "but wasn't nothin' I could do. I rolled into that college fellow's car, and we both ended up on the tracks with the train right on us. I saw smoke and heard the train's brakes, but somethin' hit me and spun the truck around. When I opened my eyes, the truck was laid up against the car behind me, but I didn't have a scratch on me."

"I don't know what happened," Mister Lewis commented, after being treated for minor cuts to his arm and shoulder. "I was just, you know, sitting there, and this big white truck slams into me. Then I'm rolling forward, and the train was coming down right in my passenger window. I was looking at the scoop part, then I saw this guy in the back of a truck across the intersection jump out like he knew what to do. Next thing I know, my car's flyin' apart, and somebody was helping me up off the street. When the train finished stopping, I saw the farmer who'd hit me on the other side scratching his head like he didn't know where he was. It took me about that long to go, 'Hey, I'm not dead,' you know?"

The conductor of the train, Lionel Pascech, however, saw things a bit more clearly, and his report only adds more confusion to the story. According to him, the train never hit Lewis' or Hollingsworth's vehicles at all. "It was extremely lucky," Pascech says. "If I had hit either car, not only would both drivers be dead, I might have derailed as well." The train, Pascech reported, was carrying approximately 70 passengers, not counting train personnel.

"The strangest thing," Pascech said, "was that I *should have* hit both cars, but I didn't. It was as if they moved, or were pushed, before the train made any contact. I saw something moving between the cars just before I hit, but I could not make out what exactly it was. If called upon to judge, I would think that it was the younger man running from his own vehicle. It was quite remarkable."

Witnesses to the accident were as puzzled as Pascech, but no one has come forward with a more coherent explanation of what exactly happened.



CHAPTER 5: PROJECT PROTEUS



Neat story? Sounds a lot like all those stories you remember right before and after word of our beloved Randel "Fireman" Portman, doesn't it? Frankly, it sounds to me (and I'm not the only one who says so) like an early report of a nova in action. Check the date again though. Uh-huh, that says 1964. That's pretty unusual itself, but do this: Go to some newspaper archive sites on the OpNet. Better yet, go to Gary, Indiana and drive around to some of the local libraries. Browse their personal computer newspaper archives, or ask them to blow the dust off the microfiche for you. You know what you'll find under the December 9th heading for the *Local Herald*? Nothing. It's completely blank. In every archive. And it's not the only one. Different issues of newspapers and news circulars all over the country (not to mention some international ones) have been selectively removed from archives and databases as far back as the 30s and 40s.

How do I know that? Did I go plugging away through all these news sources looking for holes? Hardly. Rather, I know where all the disappeared datafiles went. Utopia's got them — hundreds of them, all in encrypted files in a secure database archive completely cut off from the rest of the OpNet. There are articles here that go all the way back to the Depression, including one about a stockbroker who jumped out of his 20th-floor window during rush hour and disappeared (at least according to the report). These reports may not all be about novas, but they all look like they *might* be about novas. And they've all been locked away here in data-prison.

What does that mean? Frankly, I don't know. However, I thought when I first discovered it that it looked pretty damned odd (or convenient). What does it mean that novas are *somehow* unable to give birth to children — erupted or

otherwise — despite how well the rest of their biological processes function? If I were a nova, with all the increased energy, appetites and fame that go along, I'd be breeding like a rabbit. I'd certainly be trying, anyway. Why then, aren't there novas everywhere? Could the M-R node be *that* recessive in humans' genetic structure? It can't be, not in light of my "sociological" data (unprofessional though it may seem). I had a lot of questions, and now that I have the answers, I have to tell someone about them.

But I'm getting ahead of myself here. The important part is that all this information I'm citing and sending along to the three of you exists nowhere but here in the archive, and Utopia's got the monopoly on it all. We've been compiling it all for years now, filing it away here in the middle of nowhere. What you should be asking yourself now is, "Why?" Why gather it all just to hide it away? I can't answer that except to say that while information is power, too much information in the hands of too many people can lead to chaos. What I'm guessing is that someone inside Project Utopia has decided that the availability of this information (information that seems to indicate that novas have been around longer than we think, among other things) is not conducive to the maintenance of a perfect world. That if the populace knew that the nova phenomenon isn't quite as new as everyone thinks it is, there would be a panic as people start to wonder just how many are still hiding out there, and why.

That's my guess. What I *know* is who that someone is. I know the part of Utopia that you don't see on television or read about on the OpNet. I know about the part of Utopia called Project Proteus, and that's what I can't keep secret. That's why I contacted each of you and why I put this information together.

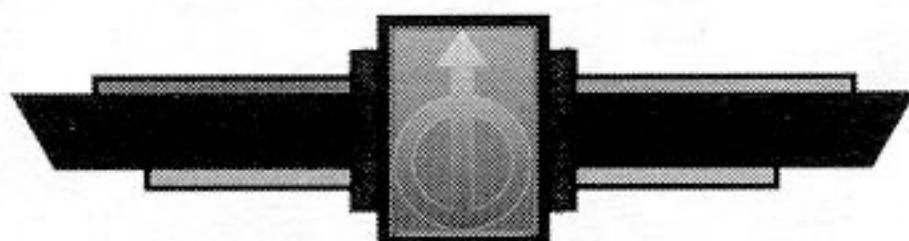
Excerpt From "The Thetis Proposal"

[Excerpt from "The Thetis Proposal": Presented to Director Justin J. Laragione of Project Utopia on 1 January, 1999.]

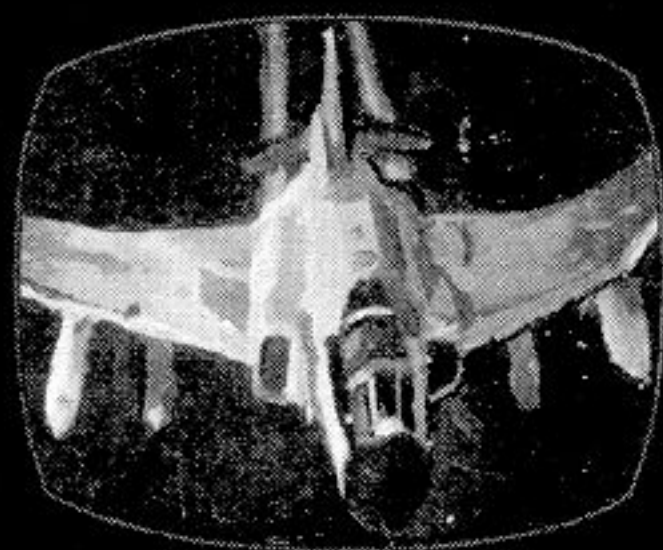
...Furthermore, as the worship of power is the most enduring of human religions, it stands to reason that these aberrant beings who emerge from our genetic stock may come to be viewed as the ultimate avatars of this religion. Yet, their failing is that these "novas" are still psychologically human, and humans respond to strength-related praise with greater and greater shows of strength. Simply put, resting our hopes for our vision of perfection for all mankind on these all-too-human beings would be the greatest of folly.

By extension, allowing the nova phenomenon (which is only beginning for the populace at large, have no doubt) to move beyond our supervision at this crucial stage would be to endanger our vision of a stable, peaceful society. In order to achieve our goals, we of the Project must institute surveillance and checks on even this new and exciting facet of our evolving society. We must be sure that the nova phenomenon remains manageable and that it does not endanger the careful social, political, economic and ecological balance we have set forth to bring to fruition.

Below, I have outlined steps by which Project specialists might see to creating the aforementioned checks and maintenance, as well as a list of the potential threats the "new humans" pose to our vision....

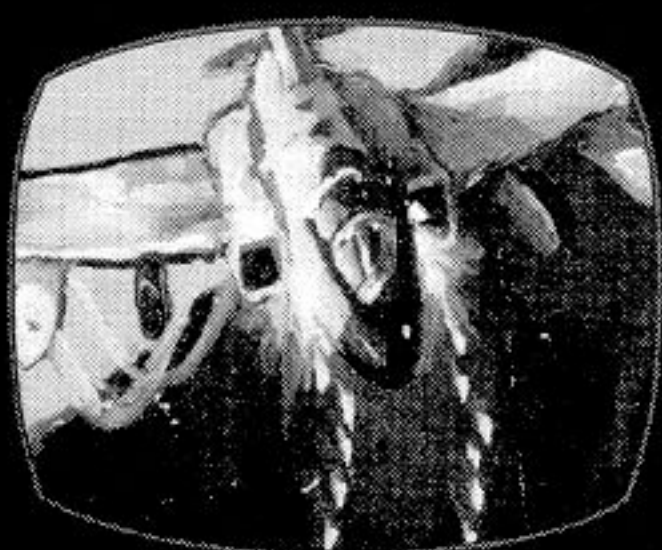


INTERCEPTED FROM ISRAELI MILITARY COMMUNICATION: MAY 27TH, 1999. PILOT UNKNOWN



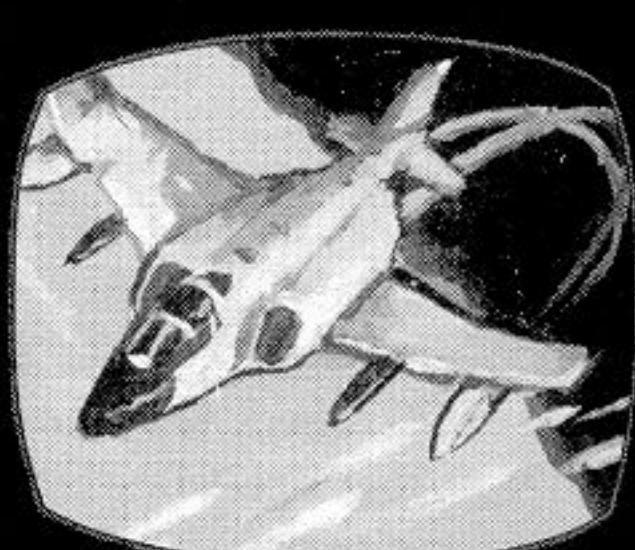
Israeli Air-Force Pilot: Sighting confirmed, Command. Single air-reconnaissance vehicle inbound from Palestine. Please advise.

Israeli Ground Station (West Bank): Highcastle One, inform the intruder that he has entered Israel's airspace and advise him to turn around immediately.



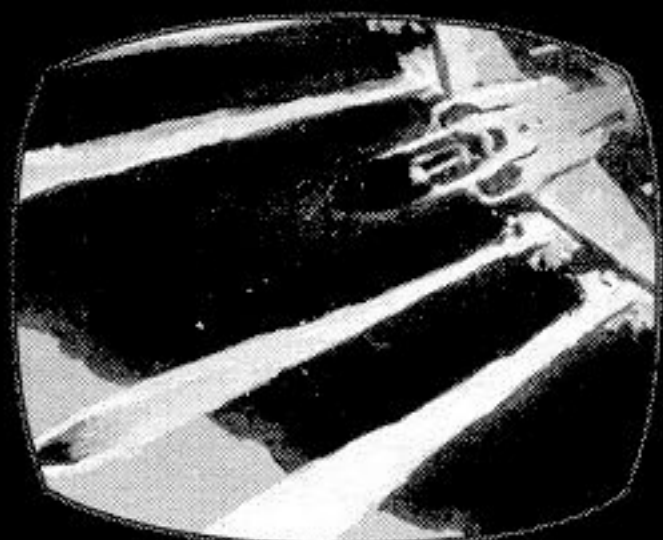
Pilot: (Pause) No response, Command. Intruder is attempting to drop below ground radar altitude and is moving deeper into Israeli airspace.

Ground Station: Confirmed, Highcastle One. Engage intruder and force him to turn back.



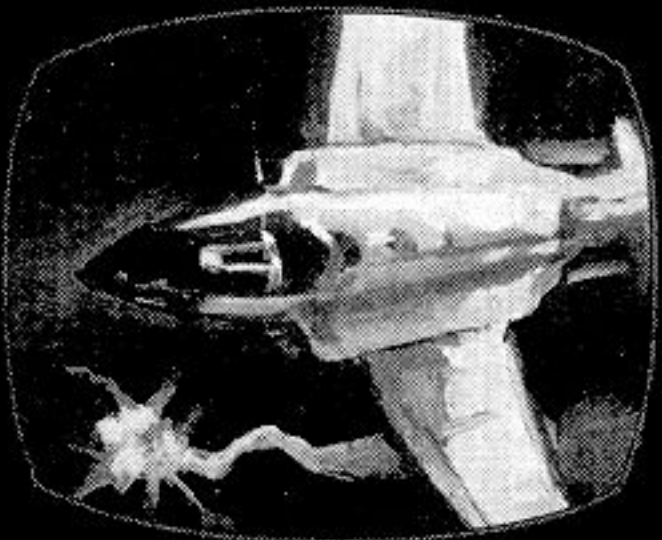
Pilot: Understood, Command. (Pause. Static.) Direct hit. The intruder's wing is damaged and he's turning about. He appears to be climb— (Static)

Ground Station: Report, Highcastle One.



Pilot: (Static) —it, Command! Intruder has come about and opened fire! Repeat, I am under fire.

Ground Station: Cripple the aircraft and force a landing, Highcastle One, but do not destroy it. We'll mobilize a contingent of troops to your relative position to retrieve the pilot when you've brought him down.



Pilot: Understood, Command. Returning fire. (Pause. Static.) It's hit again, Command. Intruding aircraft is going down. Repeat, the aircraft is— (Static. Long pause)

Ground Station: Highcastle One, report! Our radar indicates an explosion. Did the reconnaissance craft crash? Report!



Pilot: —mand, something is happening. (Static) —rcraft detonated before impact, but something is moving above the— (Static)

Ground Station: Repeat, Highcastle One. Did the pilot eject?



Pilot: (Static) —moving so fast! Can't see hi— (Static) I'm hit! Repeat, Command, my plane is damaged! Something just went right through my wing and he's still out— (Static)

Ground Station: Repeat, Highcastle One! Repeat....



CHAPTER 5: PROJECT PROTEUS

Memo from Internal Affairs

To: Harold Robertson, Public Relations
 From: Internal Affairs
 RE: New procedure
 Mister Robertson,

This recent incident in Israeli airspace is just the sort of thing to which I was referring in my announcement to you last week concerning interdepartmental cooperation. Had it not been for a timely call to my contacts among global news purveyors, this situation might well have escalated into a grave international conflict of interests.

I am disappointed to say that I found your "official" reaction to the potential crisis disturbingly inadequate and demonstrative of a lack of vision. While you did well in explaining that Project Utopia exerts no direct influence over independent (or recently erupted) novas, I found your tone far too cavalier for an event of this gravity.

People look to Project Utopia for guidance (handling procedures, if you will) concerning powerful and unavoidably public novas. Although we hold no direct sway over these beings, as you dutifully pointed out, Project Utopia must maintain a certain authoritative, reassuring presence on *all* public nova-related matters. If we present a solid opinion for the public at large, the public will adopt that opinion for its own. In so doing, we can (in effect) dictate the bounds of what is considered "appropriate public nova activity," and thus integrate these incredible beings into our vision more easily.

I have blocked your press release on this matter, but I urge you to be more careful in handling such delicate incidents in the future. As well, Internal Affairs will take a more active role in Project Utopia's congress with the public, from this point forward. After you have reviewed your staff's output of press statements and intended media products concerning Utopia policy, send it all to our department for a final check before release.

I am confident that our combined efforts will serve to further our collective goal of building a perfect tomorrow, Mister Robertson.

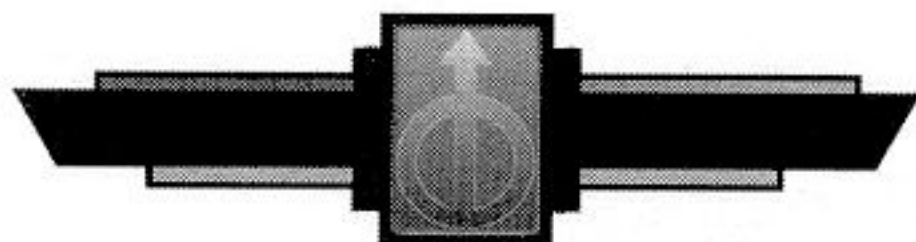
Thank you for your cooperation.

Midnight Sun

I'm sure some of you remember the flak over the nova erupting and attacking the jet in Israel in 1999? The only reason you don't know about it, Mr. Corbin (and possibly you as well, Count Orzaiz), is that the nova suspected of attacking the jet was not captured after the attack, and the story never went public. The entire event was written off as an attack on an Israeli fighter plane by a Palestinian spy plane (likely paid for by sympathetic sources in Jordan) on a covert mission. You almost wouldn't know where to look to find it in a news archive because there's no mention of a nova anywhere in it. Why? Because Director Thetis did that good a snowjob on the few networks connected enough to pick up on the event. She cast just enough doubt as to what had happened that none of the newscasters could say with certainty that it had actually been a nova that had destroyed the jet (as evidence suggested) in the first place. Thetis and her sector convinced the media hounds that to irresponsibly release a story of a possible "nova attack" on a military craft without all the evidence would only lead people to an ava-

lanche of panic. The story was downplayed to one in which two pilots had engaged in a dogfight and destroyed each other simultaneously with rocket and machine gun fire. It sounded ludicrous and unbelievable, but it only sounded like a military cover-up, as opposed to a full-blown nova incident. After all, if a nova had been involved, wouldn't the news media have jumped all over the story...?

The odd part, though, is that not two full years later, Utopian diplomats went back to Israel to hammer out the London Peace Accord. Palestine got its own little free state on Israel's border, and Utopia got a small office for "Utopian and UN consultants" there on the West Bank as well. Yet, what makes that so odd ("After all," you probably asking, "wouldn't it be in Utopia's best interests to promote peace?") is that the Israelis could have wiped the entire PLO off the map. Our sources indicate that, contrary to Israel's repeated denials of the fact, at the time of the Accord, as many as 10 novas might have been working for Israel, and they could have decimated the entire Palestinian culture if Israel had deemed it worthy. The nova who perpetrated the attack, however, was the only one from Palestine to have erupted up



CHAPTER 5: PROJECT PROTEUS

until that point. Yet despite the superior force and the golden opportunity, Israel didn't press for war.

The reason for this decision was that Thetis activated negotiator Uriah Daniels to issue Israel an ultimatum and force the ball to start rolling. Daniels' job was to make it clear that if Israel didn't start working with Utopia and Palestine to create peace, he would leak to the press that a Palestinian nova had indeed declared war on Israeli. Such a revelation could potentially lead to an all-out war between the Israelis and the Arabs of Palestine and, in an all-out war, novas from both sides were bound to be involved. Daniels made the implication very clear that the Palestinian nova force was comparable, if not superior to that of Israel's force, a fairly obvious bluff, but one impossible to disprove satisfactorily. Israeli and Palestinian nova involvement in a war, he then argued, would drag in novas from outside the immediate theater of conflict, and that situation would create a sense of brinkmanship so tense that the slightest wrong move would plunge the world into a catastrophic chaos of bullets, bombs and quantum-powered destruction. Basically, he made it clear to Israel's leaders that they were sitting

on the most volatile powder keg of the coming millennium and that the choice was entirely in their hands. Seeing the reason behind his words (or buying his bluff, some might say), the Israelis backed down and started talking, never giving the public a reason why.

Meanwhile, Utopian diplomats unconnected to Project Proteus were busy convincing leaders in Palestine that the completely unaccounted eruption (and subsequent disappearance) of the rogue nova who had destroyed the Israeli fighter had stirred up Israel's vastly superior military to a state of combat readiness. If Palestine could not show its utter devotion to peace (or so they were warned), the Israeli force would descend like the wrath of the Almighty Himself.

When all was said and done months later, Utopia set up a Palestinian consultation office to serve as a point from which to observe Israel and the novas under its influence, and to watch for more coming from Palestine, lest an actual war break out in the future. I worked with Thetis long enough to get to know her style, and she is completely capable of engineering something that... Byzantine. Add in the fact that two of the support staff and one of the nego-



CHAPTER 5: PROJECT PROTEUS



tiators on the Accord team were transferred directly from Thetis' staff to the project, and what I'm saying seems to make a bit more sense.

But it gets more complicated. I'm sure that you remember an obscure reference to a "Midnight Sun" incident in the Middle East almost four years ago, well after the Accord. I know the name has circulated through Utopia at least, because I've been seeding it into conversations here and there. General Endicott, I'm sure you've heard of it as well, as the incident was so much like a controlled nuclear strike in Israeli airspace (complete with electromagnetic pulse damage) that the United States military had to be convinced not to mobilize its troops in the region. Those of you who don't recognize the name Midnight Sun will surely recognize the name Elliot Mencken. He disappeared two weeks after the Midnight Sun incident, but let me assure you that Mencken, Midnight Sun, Thetis, the Accord and the 1999 attack on the Israeli fighter jet are all connected. Intimately.

As you remember, André, Mencken was a nova on probationary acceptance into Team Tomorrow. He was raring to go, but he hadn't been cleared yet for full membership status. Since you, Team Tomorrow applicants can be refused for everything from questionable ethics to bad breath, so it didn't look too suspicious. Thetis suggested (through her usual tortuous channels) that an appropriate test of Mencken's abilities would be to investigate the Midnight Sun incident. Apparently, some sort of blast (one that left background levels of quantum radiation so high that it could only point to nova involvement) had lit up the night sky over the West Bank, and the UN wanted an explanation. Mencken was assigned to the Palestinian Utopia complex and assigned to discover what had happened. Through a media contact in Jordan (a rodent named Nazir whom Mencken tracked to Amsterdam), Mencken learned that the Palestinian nova responsible for the attack on the Israeli fighter jet, one Asif ibn Karim, had reemerged, rallying disenchanting PLO troops in hopes of striking against Israel. Karim's deeply ingrained nationalistic streak was in no way hindered by his eruption; he was consumed with a need to wage war against all of Palestine's enemies, beginning with its long-time antagonist across the West Bank.

Working from there, Mencken tracked down eyewitness reports that told him the rest of the story. Apparently, this nova, Karim, had been inbound for the Palestinian Utopia complex (which he saw as a sign of incursion into his homeland by "Israeli-driven" outsiders) when he was intercepted by *something*. Mencken's reports are vague, relaying witnesses' descriptions of a man "made of metal strands and over-large bones" meeting Karim in mid

air and immolating him in a pyrotechnic display of force that must have been truly impressive. Afterward, the intercepting being vanished at sight-blurring speed, and Karim was nowhere to be found.

All evidence pointed to Karim's attacker being a powerful nova, and Mencken wrote up his report as an attack by a Teragen militant. I mean no offense, Count Orzaiz, but everyone knows how little most Teragen novas care for "human" perceptions of quantum abuse, and are thus more willing to indulge in it, in the name of reaching their full quantum potential. Mencken simply never considered the fact that perhaps his man of metal and bone might be a Utopian nova. And, having never heard of Project Proteus, it never occurred to Mencken that Thetis might have dispatched this particular nova of metal and bone to keep Karim from destroying her Palestinian complex and upsetting the delicate peace she'd established over the preceding five years.

Unfortunately, Mencken's ignorance didn't save him. Thetis read his report and saw that he'd uncovered enough of Proteus' clandestine involvement with the entire Midnight Sun situation to mark him as a liability. Director Ozaki and I both recommended that Mencken be invited into Project Proteus himself (after all, if he'd been clever enough to uncover Proteus activity despite our usual attention to secrecy...), but her mind was made up. A nova, she explained to us, could not maintain a covert position inside Proteus while holding such a high-profile job as a member of Team Tomorrow. He was "black-bagged," as some of our more cavalier operatives call such an operation, and laid to rest. Someone else wrote up the "official version" of the report, stating that Asif ibn Karim had immolated himself in an uncontrolled surge of quantum power as he sought to engage in a furtive late-night raid against an Israeli military compound. All that was ever said of Elliot Mencken was that he had "disappeared while on assignment."

And yet, even Director Thetis' explanation for why she designated Mencken a liability doesn't quite wash with me. I've seen the HR files of Team Tomorrow agents who are shuffled around so frequently and seemingly at random that they may well be Proteus infiltrator operatives. But if those agents are aware of Project Proteus and they do, indeed, work undercover as T2M novas, then Thetis was lying about why she had such a promising potential agent as Mencken dealt with as she did. Of course, that supposition begs the question of "Why?" (What *exactly* did Mencken uncover in his investigation?), but I don't have an answer.

I include this tale in its entirety to give you a glimpse of how Project Proteus operates. Proteus is an organiza-



tion focusing on long-range goals and subtle maneuvering. Director Thetis is a dedicated woman who will do everything she can to see that Project Utopia's goals are met, even when "everything she can" involves doing undeniably ugly things. Project Utopia has done a great deal to further its vision of a better world for all mankind, but there are some initiatives that Utopia cannot undertake publicly and maintain its benevolent image. Therefore, Thetis uses the resources of Project Proteus to take on these less "politically correct" agendas and see that they are met.

Information Control

For such a secretive and unknown aspect of the worldwide organization of Utopia, information is the most essential component of its power. We use and twist information to keep Proteus secret from Utopia. We hide information that the world public does not need to know to prevent the masses from devolving into panicked animals. We gather information against the darker sides of humanity constantly, in order to better equip ourselves against it and wipe it out. Information control is our number one weapon in the campaign to create a better world.

For instance, when I was working on the Midnight Sun event, I made sure that only those people who needed to see Mencken's report and his request for further investigation saw it, and that it wasn't circulated. I then had to tailor it carefully to make sure that what little information did get out to the public kept attention focused on the event rather than the investigator.

That's what I do here under Proteus. My official Utopian title is "Interdepartmental Data Analyst attached to Internal Affairs Division," but I'm really nothing more than a hall monitor. I sit at the center of Utopia's data networks making sure that untoward information doesn't make it to the wrong hands (the wrong hands *within* Utopia, that is), and I see to it that Director Thetis is kept apprised of suspicious-seeming transmissions, be they electronic, written or spoken. I focus most especially on interdepartmental communiqués in making sure that Utopian department-heads are doing their jobs correctly. Before this assignment, I worked at a sub-facility in Bahrain helping to coordinate the building of our repository of forgotten data that I've mentioned already. The actual work of collecting and collating all those old news stories and saved records (all the hours of being chained to a work-station as you slaved away over mind-bogglingly slow search engines) had been done before I joined Proteus. I wish I'd had a chance to be a part of the Proteus Y2K team (those agents who used the scare over the Y2K bug to lift the files in our archive from their original places

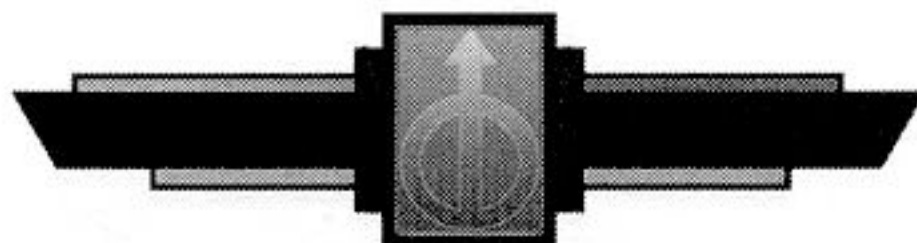
under the guise of "coding glitches" or "irreparable data-loss"), but I did get to organize, cross-reference and hide the system all away once we'd gotten the information. Even today, I still go back to Bahrain every few months or so to load up a new shipment of documents and information, and I'm the archive's *de facto* "Director." The archive's slowly filling with bits of inspired misdirection, early (and mostly ignorant) studies and news stories on novas and, finally, Project Utopia's operating guidelines. An electronic tome of the history of how Utopia (and Project Proteus) has striven to create its perfect world.

But I digress. I mention the archive only to prove a point about how special this microdisk you're reading is. The information I've just given you is something most *Utopians* don't even know. I'd say that maybe six people know of the archive and what sort of information it contains, and Thetis and I are the only ones with unrestricted access to it (ignoring the fact that she has some memory sectors encrypted so tight that even *I* can't make sense of them).

On top of that, the archive's not connected to the OpNet (or any outside lines), it's maintained by two independent power generators, Thetis' private data sectors are encrypted on a randomly changing series of ciphers, and even unencrypted data from the archive can only be downloaded onto special disks that automatically transmit computer viruses all over any system that opens them. Oh yeah, you'll have to throw away your computer after reading all this, by the way. Don't shut down until after you've passed the information on to each other.

Why the secrecy over the archive within Utopia? Simple: If your average Utopians knew about the archive, they'd fill it with useless crap and render it just another stockpile of data. The same goes for Project Proteus. If everyone knew about our efforts to keep Utopia's efforts on track (as Director Thetis explained it to me), our element of anonymity would evaporate, and we'd be just another element of the Utopian system to be manipulated. According to the original "Thetis Proposal" asking for the creation of Project Proteus (the proposal from which the director drew her code-name), "A child will behave under the direct eye of authority, but when that eye turns away, the child will express its true behavior. In order for a child to behave all the time, it must be under the impression that punishment will be forthcoming for *any* misbehavior, whether the child knows it has been caught or not. In order to instill this belief, the child must be observed without its knowledge as often as possible and chided for bad behavior at which it doesn't realize it has been observed."

Basically, the best way to keep control over something is to make it so afraid that it'll be caught stepping out of line that it chooses to stay in line all the time. As I said, that's





Thetis' theory. My theory, on the other hand, is that if you're too secretive too much of the time, people get paranoid, people get nervous and people do stupid things that tear your idealized vision of control into pieces. That's why I'm taking this risk and sending all of you copies of this disk. While the theory behind Proteus' secrecy is sound, Thetis has taken it too far to keep it manageable.

Recruitment

To say the least, working for Proteus has gotten frightening. More than 80 percent of the Utopian personnel who work under the aegis of Project Proteus have no idea that they do so. Before I joined the Project in earnest, so it's been revealed to me, I was doing Thetis' work already. I was a data analyst in Utopia's New York complex, scanning through modern news media looking for evidence of recently erupted novas that had slipped through the cracks in Utopia's normal channels. After about a year of doing that, I started getting assigned to projects that were increasingly broad in scope until I found myself combing through news archives going back to the Roaring Twenties, looking for evidence of novas, case-studies hinting at the mutagenic effects of quantum-power abuse (which got chalked up as unexplained radiation or genetic defects in those days) and all sorts of other esoteric information.

Even then, I might not have been told about the Project had I not approached Director Thetis (in her role within Internal Affairs, under her real name) with a half-baked conspiracy theory. After about six months of constant psych evaluations, seemingly random reassignments to remote Utopia complexes and interviews with "supervisors" I haven't seen before or since, Thetis herself reassigned me to her staff, and brought me in on the archive project. I've been an official Proteus operative ever since.

And from what I understand, the recruitment process is the same for any sector (as the units are called) under Project Proteus. Not that I've spoken to anyone in any of the other sectors, mind you. Doing so is strictly forbidden unless you get authorization from a mutual higher-up. I know what I do because I can see the patterns in the Human Resources files I have to alter periodically as part of my "normal" Utopian responsibilities. You wouldn't think there's anything interesting in managing spreadsheets and organizing personnel data, but I know how to spot patterns. I know what it means when a Utopia employee with a mundane job starts getting juggled around into different departments and all his evaluations start reading like they're coming out of a form-letter generator. When a standard Utopian starts receiving on-the-job training he didn't request and his psychological profile gets updated more frequently than others in his division and memos to him start

getting downloaded into the archive, it's a reasonable guess that he's working for Proteus.

Even then, though, there's no way to tell (short of asking him, of course) whether he *knows* he's working for Proteus or not. At least not through my backward way of doing it. All I can determine for sure is that one in every four Utopians has done some sort of work at Project Proteus' behest, one in every 50 works for Project Proteus regularly but unbeknownst to them, and approximately 100 of us (all over the world, out of all of Utopia's employees and operatives) knows about and works for the Project.

Among us, maybe half of us maintain a "cover" position within Utopia (such as Director Thetis and I), while the rest are strictly field agents. There are comparatively few Utopian novas affiliated with Project Proteus directly, who are aware of it. There's Montessor at the Bahrain facility, and a handful of others. The theory behind the relative minority, I'm sure, is that since novas are so rare, that rarity would express itself even within our ranks. That, and the simple fact that having too many novas working for us in secret would be too much of a security risk. You just can't keep demigods secret forever. Sure, Thetis and Ozaki yank on the Tomorrow teams' strings from time to time, but for the most part, Project Proteus relies on triple-blind novas when we call on novas at all.

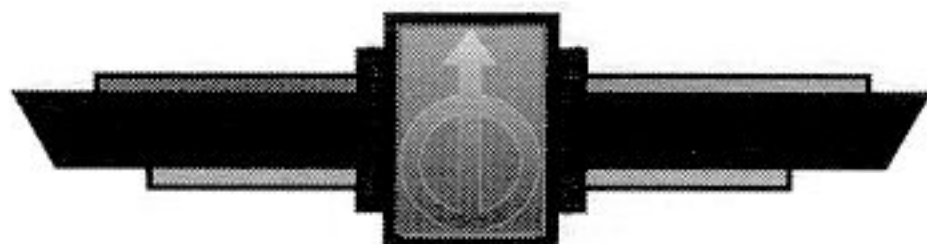
Sectors

As for the different Proteus sectors, those break down according to what Thetis thinks needs to be done. She laid out a basic structure of the areas over which Proteus would have influence, but she keeps the sectors themselves unnamed. The less concrete information there is to find out about Proteus, after all, the less chance there is of security being breached. The sectors I list here aren't the only ones, but most of the others are ones that come and go for specific purposes — more like mission teams or cells of specialists activated independently than actual sectors.

Utopian Affairs

The first sector is the Utopian affairs sector, the one Thetis and I are connected to. We make sure that Utopia is running as it should. Our goal is to make sure (in ways that go above and beyond those of Utopia's Internal Affairs Division) that Utopia accomplishes its goals on time, on task, under budget and with the correct public image firmly intact. We maintain contacts in the media (most of which answer to Thetis), a stable of accountants and businessmen, administrative personnel and operatives dedicated solely to transportation and shipping.

The Utopian-affairs sector is probably the least exciting Proteus assignment, but it has the most potential for



garnering influence over all of Utopia. If funding for an important project has been delayed, despite what would be best for Utopia's interests, a Proteus accountant can "suggest" a more economic disbursement that just happens to benefit the project in question. If a delicate situation needs to be received by the public in a certain way, so that Utopia's public image will not be tarnished unintentionally, a Proteus operative connected to one of the news media will be activated to ensure that what the public sees is the most conducive to maintaining Utopia's good standing. If standard Utopian operatives and employees are doing their jobs inefficiently (or failing to do them altogether), Proteus operatives will be assigned to supplement projects or take them on independently.

Most of the time, Utopian-affairs operatives are the ones who work for Proteus blindly, thinking of themselves as specialists, troubleshooters or quality-control regulators. They report to supervisors they never see, or they sometimes take orders directly from memos or office e-mails, never questioning where the orders are coming from. Think about it: If someone came to your office and said, "Edit this to make sure it adheres to our basic public-image guidelines," would you think you'd been chosen to aid

in a clandestine venture? That unassuming air, according to Director Thetis, is what makes Proteus so effective, especially within Utopia's own staff. The goals of Project Proteus coincide with Utopia's stated goals, ultimately, and only the thin veneer of secrecy and objectivity separates the two.

Intelligence and Information

The largest Proteus sector is the one I used to be attached to: intelligence and information. This sector is Proteus' lifeblood and the one that remains the most securely hidden. If any sector can be said to be the core of Proteus, the information sector is it. Without constant updates and reports from its many informants (aware of Proteus and completely ignorant of it), Proteus would have long since run out of steam and faltered. After all, how can one prevent an organization as broad and far-reaching as Utopia from going astray without precise knowledge of the areas in which it may be in danger of doing so? How can an organization like Utopia build for this world its perfect tomorrow, if it does not know what parts of the world are in the most need of direction? Keeping tabs on Utopia's operations and procedures (present and future), keeping tabs



CHAPTER 5: PROJECT PROTEUS

on the major trends in the global political theater and making sure that its own agents are staying in line are the initiatives to which Proteus dedicates most of its resources, manpower and time.

This sector also employs the largest number of operatives. Many never know that they are working for Proteus, though they remain Proteus operatives for as long as they remain employed with Utopia. This sector boasts data analysts, performance supervisors, accountants, human resources directors and media liaisons. The sector even employs a few unobtrusive janitors who make it a habit to just happen to be around for juicy tidbits of gossip, or who read through every scrap of paper that gets thrown away along particular rows of cubicles.

And it's at this point where Proteus starts to get a little worrisome. Those operatives I already listed are the ones who *don't* know they work for Proteus. As I see it, the ones who *do* know are nothing better than spies, snitches and turncoats. Thetis has made it clear that this sector is Proteus' strength, and that it must do its job at all costs. If the spies' methods don't make any friends, she says, so be it. For those of us who know of it, the spectre of surveillance looms like a personal bank of thunderheads. We suspect its presence every moment, but we never know when it might break and come crashing down on us.

What's even more interesting is the degree to which Thetis keeps regular track of novas, burgeoning world governments (ones that have come and gone in the wake of the nova revolution) and even other intelligence agencies. Why she has been authorizing such extensive methods and keeping them to herself is beyond me, but the amount of information she's managed to gather is breathtaking. However, I don't think *what* she knows is quite as important to you as *how* she's gone about finding it out — as where her eyes and ears are. I'd bet money that she has Director Laragione's office bugged.

Proteus' spies are not many (as I said, the bulk of the information sector's operatives are planted behind desks and computer screens), but they are pervasive. You will likely find at least one Proteus-sanctioned research doctor at every Rashoud facility, studying nova physiology, quantum energies and the effects of the latter on the former. You will find one Proteus operative (sometimes a nova, sometimes not) assigned to work with Team Tomorrow in every theater in which that group operates. I call it a "theater" because you can't get much more for-show than by sending T2M in to save the day. Though I couldn't tell you who they are, at least one Proteus spy sits in on every board meeting that goes on in a Utopian complex. We have not infiltrated members into the UN, the Teragen, the Directive, or any world governments as

far as I know (and remember that I am, by no means, privy to all Thetis does and orders), but I know for a fact that we keep an eye on each of those groups, if only through the lowest echelon possible. How else would I be able to get in touch with each of you through your private electronic mail accounts if Proteus didn't have *some* kind of "in" with each of you? How would I know enough about each of you to arrange the pickup that has put this disk in your hands? Proteus has gathered information from somewhere, if not from the sources themselves.

And what Project Proteus' intel sector lacks in manpower, it makes up for in automated surveillance. Using wiretaps, data-spider programs, laser microphones, satellite pictures and a host of other techniques, we expand our eyes and ears beyond the scope of what our operatives can bring in alone. Hardly a word can be said inside a Utopian complex that doesn't make its way back to Thetis' ears in one form or another. Vehicles and equipment designed and produced for T2M use — like the Peregrine VTOL jet — are all outfitted with tracking devices, tactical transponders, satellite GPSs, hands-free radio microphones and performance monitors (none of which is sinister in and of itself), but so are the company cars provided for Utopian officials and the homes provided for the families of Utopia's nova employees (a fact that none of them are told, and none are expected to be able to find out on their own — I think it's just a matter of time before some clever nova puts 269 and 397 together). The amount of information Proteus has gathered around the world (information gathered *outside* Utopia's standard information channels) is astounding. There isn't even enough room on one of these microdisks to give you an outline of everything, even if I wanted to. If not for Proteus' archive, I don't know where we'd put it all.

Security and Secrecy

The most frightening sector of Project Proteus (frightening in an up-front way, rather than by implication) is the combined security and secrecy sector. This sector is responsible for making sure that Proteus operatives do not give away the existence of the Project to anyone inside or outside Utopia. It's also charged with completing the less telegenic operations that must be undertaken in order to build a perfect tomorrow. Mencken's "man of metal and bone" was likely a Proteus operative from the security sector, for instance, as was the one who black-bagged Mencken himself.

True to form, Proteus operatives under this sector are the hardest ones to track down. No records of them exist (even in the archive), and those who come up out of Utopia's own ranks aren't so much reassigned as unwritten. Records of their former affiliation disappear from our databases fact



CHAPTER 5: PROJECT PROTEUS

by fact, and the hard-drive sections from which they are removed are overwritten immediately. My assumption is that those who are unwritten are then transferred to remote locations, never to see their homes, families or birth-towns ever again, but it's impossible to say for sure without a paper-trail. Of the numerous agents and operatives who make up this sector, only Director Ozaki (the Director in charge of coordinating Proteus' nova agents' activities) remains visible within Proteus itself. He's the only secrecy and security agent I have ever seen twice, and that's only because he and I both communicate with Thetis regularly.

Excerpt from OpNews

[excerpt from OpNews, September 15, 2003]

Tragic House-Fire Kills Three

MEXICO CITY, MEXICO

A tragic house fire in the Utopia-constructed gated community, Villa Mariposa, claimed the lives of Louise Schuyler, wife of Utopian Thomas Schuyler, and the Schuylers' two children, Marcus and Denise, yesterday. Though Thomas Schuyler was away on assignment during the fire, he could not be reached for comment as of press time.

Investigation of the fire has revealed no suspicion of arson, but local firefighters are still baffled about what started the fire. Lieutenant Felipe d'Ortiz, adjunct to Utopia's Mexico City complex and arson inspector, will say only that the fire was likely caused by an overloaded electrical socket that was not safeguarded properly by a surge protector. Juan Valesenz, one of the first firefighters on the scene, however, does not agree with Lieutenant d'Ortiz's initial assessment.

"We found flash indicators around many of the electrical sockets," Valesenz said, "but nothing I saw convinces me that the fire originated at any of them. In fact, none of us could tell where the fire had come from. When we arrived, fire was everywhere, and afterward, everything was melted, blackened or destroyed. It was like fire was suddenly everywhere at once inside the house."

Utopian officials have expressed their sincere condolences and assured the residents of Villa Mariposa (and their numerous gated communities around the world) that the homes provided by Utopia meet or exceed every current written safety standard. "It is Utopia's policy," the organization said in a press release issued almost immediately after the fire, "to ensure the safety of every Utopian nova employee's family, just as thoroughly as we ensure the safety of our employees themselves. We are shocked over this tragedy, and we will spare no expense in aiding the investigation."

The manner in which Utopia intends to aid the investigation was unclear in the press release, but Utopian officials have insisted that residents of Utopian communities are in no danger of a similar accident.

Novas

The highest concentration of Proteus novas lies in the security and secrecy sector. Thetis keeps some around for strategy analysis (though I've never heard of a nova who could think faster on his feet than Director Thetis), infiltration and oversight within Team Tomorrow, and triple-blind prognostication, but most Proteus novas remain on-call for sheer power. Proteus operatives and analysts have been evaluating the potential of novas to serve as military warriors for almost a decade, and we tested their capabilities well before the Equatorial Wars of 2001. A small, but growing, percentage of sponsored "elite" novas even act as full-time Proteus operatives.

Why then, if Proteus uses novas for its more heavy-handed actions, hasn't the rest of the world (or at least the

rest of Utopia) tumbled to the secret of Project Proteus' existence? The answer lies partially in the fact of *which* novas Thetis and Ozaki choose for Proteus. Through its plants in Utopia's many Rashoud facilities, Proteus can very closely approximate how powerful certain novas are, how much control they have over their powers, how mentally stable they are and how much the use of their quantum powers has affected their bodies. Proteus novas are usually assigned to complete projects that require the greatest amounts of raw power (like destroying the Russian *Jormungandr* stealth-capable submarine, which had been stolen and housed in a secret facility near Talaud Island in 2005), thus those who are chosen are usually the ones most warped by quantum abuse. As such, they have just as much at stake in hiding themselves from the world as Proteus



CHAPTER 5: PROJECT PROTEUS

does. If word of their power-levels or their mutated forms got out to the public at large, there would be a public opinion backlash against all novas. At least, that's what Directors Thetis and Ozaki tell them.

However, if Proteus-affiliated novas try to rebel or go rogue, the security and secrecy sector is ready and equipped to deal with them. The subsector of Proteus designed to deal with potentially damaging nova emergencies has existed in some form ever since the early days of the Aeon Society. Based on a vision of a world in flames, destroyed at the hands of insanely powerful novas drunk on quantum energy, Utopia came into being with numerous contingencies already in place, and since Director Thetis' rise to the directorship of Proteus, she has expanded upon these contingencies for this past decade.

Realizing that novas are far too powerful to ever control directly or to overpower without devastating consequences, many of Thetis' designs rely on subtlety and long-range goals. With aid from Utopia proper, she has engaged in an intense media campaign to seed the viewing public with the ideas that erupting into a cauldron of cosmic power begets a sense of responsible civic duty. Thus, when new novas erupt, they will have hopefully been

indoctrinated with this message and will actually use their powers responsibly.

In fact, Thetis uses this tactic to devastating effect against the novas of the Teragen. No offense, Count Orzaiz, but she (and many Proteus-affiliated Utopians) consider the Null Manifesto and the basic lifestyle of many Teragen novas to be the ultimate defiance against the Utopian way of life. If every man is an island, she would say, there is no way to maintain a unity. Thetis' media campaign against Teragen novas is the main reason so many news stories focus on Teragen-inspired acts of terrorism against humanity. By betraying their "responsibilities," the Teragen novas paint themselves in a harsh, anti-Utopian light. As pervasive as Utopia is (or so Director Thetis intends), anti-Utopian sentiments doom themselves to being squeezed out of the picture, thus maintaining the sanctity of Project Utopia's vision. Plus, such sensational news stories make excellent smoke-screens for fouled Proteus operations, when the need arises. Case in point: for every actual act of anti-baseline aggression on the part of some rogue Teragen member (Geryon, let's say), Proteus saturates the media with three false ones, most often as a way of covering up their own questionable activities.



Another level of keeping the world safe from potential nova problems involves the research and manufacture of nova pharmaceuticals. At one time or another since your eruptions, all of you (except you, of course, General Endicott) have taken adrenocilin, moxinoquantamine or (if you're particularly adventurous) mite. Any of these nova-drugs (except the illicit ones, of course) are available with only minimal supervision at any Rashoud facility around the world. These drugs increase, slow down or slightly warp the ebb and flow of your quantum-controlling capabilities, while some simply enhance your physical prowess.

The cost for these improvements, however, has come in realizing what has been added to the drugs. Mox, 'cilin and mite have all been adulterated in ways that make them subtly addictive (both physically and psychologically) to novas. Many of them (mox and 'cilin are always altered this way) are even cut with other psychoactives, including a Valium derivative in order to keep nova users calmer and more level-headed while using their powers. Some novas take these chemicals more for the side effects than for the drug's primary purpose.

However, what these side effects indicate is that adrenocilin carries a hidden birth-control agent that activates as your node channels quantum energy. The reason for this admixture, as I've been able to gather, is that Thetis believes that a world overrun with super-powerful beings would destroy itself like a body riddled with cancerous cells. Until a way can be found for novas and baselines to live without fear, jealousy or recrimination, some would say, it is better to keep the number of active novas on Earth at a manageable minimum. Yet, though I have never breathed a word of this to anyone within the Project, I utterly disagree with this rationale. After all, while a quantum "arms-race" could *potentially* have devastating consequences, I know that human beings (baseline and nova) are too smart (or too scared) to let such an event come to pass. The nations of the world sat on stockpiles of nuclear missiles for decades once the Cold War started, yet humanity managed not to annihilate itself, didn't it? Now that we're entering this golden age of peace in our time, it's suicidally confrontational for Proteus (for Thetis) to strike at the novas' most basic of human rights.

Besides, numerous opportunities exist to decrease the nova population already. The institution of using nova proxies on the battlefield came as a blessing Thetis couldn't have asked for any sooner. A simple tug here or there on a tense political situation (such as the Kashmir conflict) can force nova elites into conflict where diplomacy might have won the day under normal circumstances. Dangerous "liabilities" can be assigned to suicide missions in which the odds are stacked too high for even a nova to overcome.

Unwitting novas can even be "black-bagged" as was Elliot Mencken, by euthanists, paid assassins or other novas working for Project Proteus.

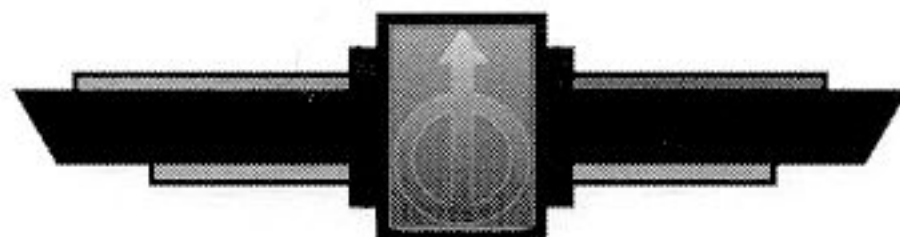
However, standard Proteus guidelines for dealing with nova threats don't always involve such histrionic, heavy-handed punishments. There are better (and easier) ways to deal with a threat than to quantum-bolt it into oblivion. Reassignment to a desk-job for a few months will sometimes do the trick, as will forced leaves of absence. Giving a nova a great deal of money to do something relatively insignificant can also keep him under control. For those who cannot be contained by such means, outsourcing them to more remote posts sometimes helps, as does utter isolation from anything to which the novas would pose a danger. Cells of novas too freakish to remain in the public view (though still exceptionally powerful) are assigned to the exploration and charting of the depths of the oceans, the inner depths of the Earth's crust and the deep reaches of the jungles and rain forests. The rigors of space travel present a unique challenge to some novas, as well, not to mention a freedom they wouldn't have on Earth. While Project Proteus has no direct hand in assigning individuals to operations outside its sphere of influence (that responsibility is the purview of Project Utopia itself), Thetis and Ozaki make recommendations based on the intelligence Proteus operatives provide them, and they can usually pull enough strings between the two of them to see that the subjects of their recommendations are the ones most likely to be chosen for such missions.

Other Initiatives

Yet despite the existence of these contingencies (and my own fears and suppositions), Project Proteus' security and secrecy sector is responsible for more than just dealing with novas. This sector is also charged with the unpleasant task of seeing that every aspect of creating a true Utopia is carried out and completed. Even the more unpleasant tasks; the ones that the public appreciates, but remains happy not knowing about. "What," you ask, "could be more unpleasant than all the spying and the nova contingencies?" Unfortunately, plenty.

- Science

Science, for instance, is not always a golden chariot that heralds a new age. Many times, studies of the unknown have terrible, unfortunate consequences, and it is often the responsibility of Proteus secrecy and security operatives to see that the studies continue nonetheless. Ecological engineering (terraforming, to the layman) is still a growing field, and its side effects on living ecosystems must be tested covertly before any measures can be inflicted on the world at large. Though Doctor Spencer Balmer is decidedly a genius, and the world is that much better for the



CHAPTER 5: PROJECT PROTEUS

environmental work he has done, he is not perfect. Select isolated ecosystems (many of which were charted by exploratory cells of Proteus nova operatives for this purpose) were subjected to Antaeus' preliminary ecological engineering, and few thrived successfully for an acceptable length of time. Despite numerous, rigorous computer simulations of his work and the conceptual screening of several superhumanly intelligent novas, it was decided that controlled exposure to a collection of real habitats would reveal whether Antaeus' designs were truly capable of stabilizing a real-world ecological niche. Those ecosystems that failed (from rivers polluted, to habitats overrun with predators that turned cannibalistic or began to hunt humans when their food supply ran out, to the decomposition of entire coral reefs) were carefully contained and destroyed by sanitation operatives (or SanOps) of Proteus well before the eventual advent of the Zushima macrobe. It is possible (though unconfirmed) that Antaeus has guessed the existence of Proteus' involvement in his work, but even that dour scientist is enough of a pragmatist to agree that such tests had to be carried out.

Medical science is an area of study that Utopia seeks to perfect as well, which implies that much experimentation and testing must be done behind closed doors. For the most part, the Triton Foundation has taken on the leading role in worldwide medical advancement, along with the subsidiary aid of pharmaceutical companies, genetic engineering firms and independent medical doctors and scientists. Normally, Project Proteus has no stake in such work, but every now and again, operatives are called on in states of emergency. It is the responsibility of the security sector to "maintain medical quarantines" (which is to say, eliminate sources of intense threat) whenever a particularly virulent strain of some previously unknown disease makes itself manifest and there is not time enough to develop a cure before an outbreak. The operatives then return to a Triton Foundation research and development facility with specimens for study, in hopes of creating a countermeasure against possible future contamination.

Baseline and nova parapsychicians within Proteus also study and find medical means with which to catalog and codify the genesis and nature of *Homo sapiens novus*. This initiative includes every type of medical procedure, from administering nova-strength birth control in adrenocilin to keep the nova population at a manageable level (a position with which I cannot agree, for numerous reasons), to rumors of bizarre, Mengele-esque studies of powerful novas in captivity at the Bahrain facility.

Of the many nova-related experiments, these last are the ones I find the most distasteful and disgusting, while simultaneously the most necessary (if they are be-

ing carried out at all). While it has been speculated that abusing high levels of quantum energy has unwanted physiological side effects, none of the scientists' reports that I have scanned seem to suggest a reason for *how* exactly it happens. Without even that foundation, it is impossible to discuss (much less discover) a cure for this supposed nova aberrance. Thus, scientists of Project Proteus spare no expense (nor feel any compunction) in subjecting novas to tests designed to solve the mystery. The least of these tests involves constant stool and urine sampling, as well as extensive cell cultures taken from any section of the nova's body the scientist in charge of the investigation deems necessary. Some of the more rigorous testing inflicts on a nova chemotherapy, direct bombardment from numerous and varied sources of mutative radiation, prototypical quantum gene therapy and various torturous "stress-tests."

As few novas survive these kinds of tests, the subjects involved are usually those who have somehow found themselves prisoners in the Bahrain holding facility with no chance of parole or pardon. If a nova criminal warrants this treatment, he has likely been deemed beyond reform, or his quantum powers have become so dangerously out of control that his very existence makes him a threat to humanity.

- Ensuring Peace

Proteus' security sector operates in the world stage of communal peace as well, taking on tasks that the public persona of Utopia would be loathe to accept for fear of negative publicity. Proteus operatives act through the UN as diplomatic and ambassadorial aides in the dual role of peacemaker and instigator. If a tyrannical, unmutual dictator seizes power and threatens the peace, and no official means seem capable of unseating him or rationally dealing with him, Proteus instigators are sometimes activated to ensure that negotiations fail and the only alternative solution to the situation is a military one. The instigators are also responsible for keeping appropriate regions embroiled in conflict, while keeping the scale limited. "Hot-spots" such as these serve as modern-day Rabbahs, where troublesome, uncooperative or dangerous liabilities are sent to disappear.

Peacemakers, on the other hand, strive to make sure (at any cost of face or political standing) that hostilities do *not* break out in situations which would otherwise seem destined to lead to battle. For instance, Director Thetis herself activated Agent Uriah Daniels as the diplomatic envoy to Israel, whose job it was to convince the Israeli government of just how foolhardy it would be to continue hostilities with Palestine. Agent Daniels, acting as Director Thetis' mouthpiece more often than not, is one of the best peacemakers in the employ of Project Proteus.



CHAPTER 5: PROJECT PROTEUS

Peacemakers and instigators also function as bodyguards for important world leaders, whether the leaders in question ask for the aid or not. However, while Thetis and the other leaders of Project Proteus condone political assassination in certain instances, no operative of the Project is allowed to engage in that practice himself. Political assassination, Thetis has made clear, is far too unsubtle for Proteus to take part in directly. If an assassination can be traced back to Proteus (and thus, to Utopia), the foundation of trust Utopia has built would erode overnight. Why this philosophy does not apply to novas, civilians or military personnel, however, is something I have never gotten an answer to.

Project Proteus operatives also take a hand in ensuring communal peace by being involved in law enforcement and certain aspects of national military efforts. Proteus operatives work in some capacity in each of the G7 nations' law enforcement agencies, from monitoring police-band transmissions to surreptitiously triggering National Guard mobilizations in particularly tense moments.

The primary ways Proteus influences worldwide military forces involve providing reconnaissance on nova elites and funding (or hampering funds for) the development of

certain types of equipment. We have had trouble insinuating ourselves within American police forces or government offices, as leadership within the United States (especially President Pendleton) xenophobically resists most of the gestures Project Utopia makes in America's direction. We have made some small headway with that nation's military and the Central Intelligence Agency, but countries like France, India, China and Russia have been marginally more hospitable of late. For some reason, Americans seem more receptive to the moves and methods of the mysterious "Directive" than to Utopia.

However, as Thetis considers such methods more in line with "damage control," most of Project Proteus' resources concerning the security sector's initiative to ensure peace go toward preventative measures. These measures include covert operations designed to eliminate the problems that lead to crime in the first place. Proteus has also influenced Utopia to prohibit the manufacture of certain types of weapons or other technology deemed dangerous (usually those items that would find themselves in the hands of well-connected criminals). At the same time, Proteus operatives have spread false or misleading rumors about certain types of equipment.





You may remember the turn-of-the-century scare in the media over “tunnel bullets” which supposedly were flechette bullets that did not explode or spray the flechettes until impact. The theory was that these bullets were especially effective against kevlar bullet proof vests because the shells exploded into a cone of razor-sharp bits when they had already weakened kevlar impact fibers by hitting them and causing them to stretch out and absorb the projectile.

After seeding this rumor throughout the criminal underworld of several nations (and displaying several mocked-up “demonstrations” on OpNews), criminals and terrorists began clamoring for this ammunition, which covert Proteus operatives supplied gladly. The catch, of course, was that these bullets did not technically exist. Those that were sold at all (as more tantalizing bait) either melted in use, ruining whatever gun they had been loaded into, or exploded, thereby neutralizing the criminal using the ammunition.

Most of Proteus’ initiatives of this type come and go based on Director Thetis’ cause at the time, but though they are sporadic, they are usually quite thorough. Most such missions don’t even require lengthy follow-up. The assassination of a rising crime lord or particularly rabid figure who could conceivably rise to political prominence is such a mission, and once accomplished, it is usually written off as a done deed and handed over to the information and intelligence sector for analysis and future review to make sure that fallout from the mission remains within acceptable levels. For reference, Proteus handles the elimination of its own “liabilities” in this fashion as well.

• Corporate Policy

Another fledgling subsector of Proteus that falls under the security and secrecy sector is the one designed to deal with the corporate world. This subsector is intended to maintain Utopia’s corporate holding against fiscal competitors in arenas that Utopia cannot operate. Cells of agents working under this subsector will be called on to indulge in corporate espionage, ultra-efficient (read: insider) trading, trade piracy and fiscal sabotage. Thetis will likely authorize the use of these measures against only those corporations who endanger the environment callously, challenge the financial holdings and security of Utopia itself directly, support criminal organizations or produce products that grind against the Utopian vision (such as compounds used in biological or chemical weapons). However, these techniques have a potential to be turned against unstable “liabilities,” as well.

Hierarchy of Proteus

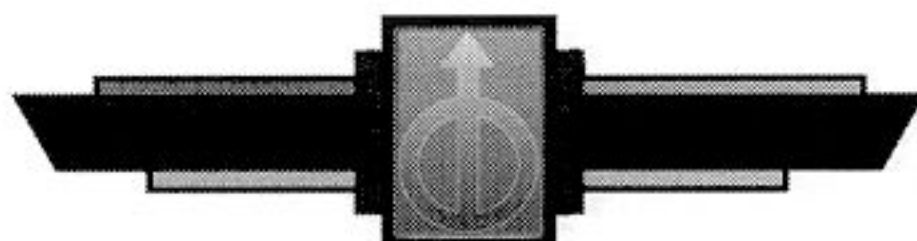
As these sectors overlap one another so often, especially where the information and intelligence sector is concerned, Project Proteus operatives (both aware and unaware) find themselves taking orders from a variety of people. This is intentional, as the establishment of a clear and direct chain of command would serve to codify what should be more complex and nebulous. There is no more certain a way to ferret out the secret of Proteus’ existence than to establish a recognizable hierarchy, and Thetis will not let that happen.

However, as you may have picked up already, there are several central figures who drive Proteus’ policy and, in effect, “run the show.” Although they don’t seem to contradict one another’s orders or forward their own agendas (as least inasmuch as I can tell from orders I have received and those of Proteus agents I have been able to track), they do so more out of respect than from a strict adherence to procedure. The only two people who can be said to have any true authority within Project Proteus are Director Thetis and Director Ozaki.

Thetis

Director Thetis (so-named for the mythical mother of Achilles who sought to make her child invulnerable — or “perfect” as some translations of the myth would say) created Project Proteus. Drawing her support through numerous media contacts and Utopian officials, this woman runs Proteus from behind her position within Utopia’s Internal Affairs Division. She is only moderately high-placed in her official Utopian capacity, but her control over Project Proteus is absolute. No operation happens without her authorization; no operative is inducted into Proteus without her approval; she reads every mission report, no matter how trivial it may be. I’m fully convinced that Director Thetis could draw on her basis of support to overrule (or even oust) any member of Project Proteus’ staff, and it’s likely she could exercise that sort of influence over many, if not all, members of Project Utopia’s staff.

Rumors say that Thetis is surrounded at all times by a cadre of personnel that exists solely to act as her bodyguards and personal security force, but if such rumors are true, I haven’t seen any evidence to support them. I have spoken to Director Thetis on several occasions (something I take as a mark of honor — after all, she doesn’t speak personally with every agent), and she was never encircled by jackbooted thugs or even suspiciously attentive administrative assistants. What I believe the rumors refer to is some secret list of orders that will not come to light except in the event of Thetis’ untimely death



or disappearance. However, even if neither supposition is true, the very *thought* is enough to keep potential random elements in line.

Ozaki

Director Ozaki also rises above the other prominent figures inside Project Proteus, because he is in charge of Proteus' nova relations. Though it is unclear whether he is a nova himself (I personally believe he is), Ozaki coordinates the actions of Proteus' nova operatives and manages our baseline efforts that deal specifically with novas. He holds the power of oversight above Montessor at the Bahrain facility, and he occasionally sticks a hand into the exploits of Team Tomorrow, just to make sure that those novas (i.e., "the power of today") are adhering to Utopia's vision of the perfect tomorrow. Unlike Director Thetis, however, Ozaki holds no official position within Project Utopia. Thetis recruited him shortly after the foundation of Project Proteus for reasons unknown (at least to me) and elevated him to his current position. She then had his background almost completely erased (as I've been able to find no trace of it in the archive or outside) and began moving him around the world from Utopian complex to Utopian complex, never leaving him assigned to one place for more than a few months. Ozaki answers to Director Thetis in all he does, but he has no responsibility to any other figure inside Project Proteus.

Other Leaders

The other directors within Proteus operate mostly unofficially. They specialize in certain areas of interest and work in those areas until Director Thetis decides that they would further Proteus' or Utopia's objectives more efficiently in some other capacity. If an operative demonstrates a particular aptitude in his area, Thetis usually lets him stay in that position long enough to garner the respect of those who work with him. Once his word is accepted as the authority in his field, the operative assumes the title "Director," though that title will not appear on his Utopia dossier unless he has achieved a similar title in his public position.

For instance, I am considered the Director of the Project Proteus archive because I helped organize it and I still run it. No one knows more about the archive than I do, thus when new operatives are assigned to maintain it, I am the one who trains them and answers their questions about it. Nova Montessor has been assigned to the Bahrain facility for so long (recruiting potential Proteus operatives, maintaining the security systems and helping reprogram inmates who seem resistant to standard social reform) that no one questions his choices and ideas con-

cerning the facility. As long as he does not step outside the bounds laid out by Ozaki and Thetis (or the more general ones laid out under Project Utopia itself), he will likely remain in that position for the rest of his life. Likewise, Albert Petalan has proven himself so good at interacting with the novas of Team Tomorrow in his official position as Utopian liaison, that he has created a cross-sector position within Project Proteus that involves little more than keeping Utopian novas happy.

Most of these directorships beneath Thetis and Ozaki are comparatively insignificant, but the equality in title reduces Protean infighting to a minimum. As every director is equal in authority, there is very little reason for one director to usurp the authority of another. Furthermore, as each director is usually the utmost authority in his area of Proteus' operations, a potential usurper would have to match his skill level before being able to make any move in the first place. The hierarchy of Proteus functions very much like a confederation of individual fiefdoms overseen by independent nobles who, in turn, derive their authority from a central figure and who operate to further the goals of that figure (which, in this case, involve the good of the entire world). Thus, Thetis encourages competition, but among only the most qualified candidates who seek only the best means of achieving Proteus' and Utopia's goals.

Why You?

Doubtless, you're all wondering by this point why I've chosen to divulge this information to you. First, let me try to make clear my reasons for coming forward at all. I think Proteus has gone too far with some of its initiatives, and those initiatives need to be stopped. I don't like the thought that I could be surrounded by spies (especially since, technically, I'm one of them myself), and I know that that sort of paranoia is not conducive to a harmonious, peaceful world. I also disagree strongly with Thetis' objective of choking off the birth rate of the nova population, if for no other reason than the hue and cry that will arise when the program is discovered. Although many of Proteus' less telegenic initiatives are frightening (or border on Orwellian), they are necessary means to the end of generating a perfect world. All except these two. I cannot abide working with an organization that sanctions such actions, but my persistent conscience has made it clear to me that I cannot very well retire and fade into obscurity either. Thus, I'm giving you this information to believe or disbelieve as you see fit. Proteus will go on and endure whether or not word of its existence becomes public, but if enough awareness is





raised, at least these two initiatives will come to an end once they are brought to light.

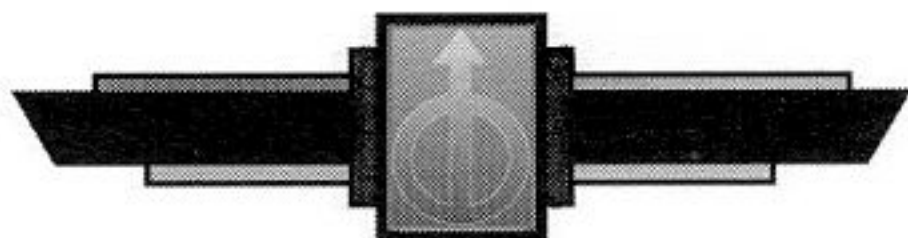
Proteus is not Big Brother, by any means, but it has gotten away from its original intent and the behavior of Director Thetis is becoming more bizarre. Project Proteus now has the potential to make a bid for control (of Utopia, of national governments, of nova evolution) whereas before, it existed only to keep Utopia on track and to do that which public Utopians cannot. The world is a nasty place, and nasty tactics must be employed at times, in order to bring about the Utopian ideal. I understand that, but if events progress any farther down these lines, we will be sacrificing Utopia for a sterile megalopolis ruled by fear and paranoia. If I can keep that possibility from coming to pass by putting this information at your disposal, then I'll do (hopefully, I already have done) whatever is necessary to see that it gets there.

"But why *me*?" I'm sure you're thinking. I shouldn't wonder if you, General Endicott, are curious as to how I found you and managed to make contact with you at all. If you are reading your own copy of this microdisk, you have shown at least a modicum of trust in me (after all, it's not every day that someone "from deep inside Utopia" contacts you using

your own e-mail address, asking you to pick up an object you aren't expecting from a person you've never met before), for which I cannot thank you enough. As to how exactly I found you, I'll borrow a little more on that trust and just say that I abused my position and misappropriated Protean equipment and classified information.

As to why I went to the trouble in the first place, that's a bit more individually motivated. André, I chose you because you were right outside our doorstep already, and your psych profile indicated that you would be sympathetic to my point of view. Your psych profile also indicates that you like to cause trouble, and I can't have you crusading against Proteus without all the facts, especially considering how much good Utopia and Proteus both have done for the world so far. Whatever you do once you read this, take some time to think about the implications of your actions. Anyone you tell inside Utopia could either be working for Proteus or could become a "liability" against Proteus' secrecy. That's why I'm telling the three of you first, so you can decide together what, if anything, needs to be done.

Count Orzaiz, you've never made any secret about how to find you, as you make your rounds around the world defending the reputation of the Teragen and of all of that



movement's adherents. As such, you are the only one I feel in the least comfortable approaching. I must admit to a certain amount of fear and prejudice in dealing with any Teragen nova, but I'm sure that my unease is born from ignorance. As an individual, I find you quite pleasant, and while I can't truly say that I agree with the sentiment that novas are not human, I do respect the faith with which you and your comrades believe it. Therefore, I ask you to respect my presentation of Project Proteus as I know it.

I wouldn't begin to try to seek out Divis Mal himself (and I would ask you to refrain from doing so as well), as he would surely misunderstand Project Proteus' initiatives, and that sort of misunderstanding could lead to disaster. I come to you because you're a diplomat. Whether that occupation comes from your desire to see novas and baselines coexist without tension (just as Utopia does), or from a simple lack of better candidates, you understand how important calm civil disagreement, rather than reactionary rancor, is in such a delicate situation. Mal, I fear, would never understand that. Plus, Director Thetis considers him a dangerous, anarchic threat to the peace Utopia is striving for, and my providing him with one of these microdisks would seem the utmost perfidy.

General Endicott, of the three people to whom these microdisks are addressed, you are the only baseline on the list. Despite appearances, I'm not engaging in tokenism. You've risen quite high in the United States military (I've seen your service record), and you're one of the most outspoken anti-Utopia advocates on record. You've done much to poison the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as well as President Pendleton, against the gestures Utopia has extended toward the United States. I can't guess why you are so opposed to the Utopian ideal (nor will I insult you by trying), but I hope that you can put that reason aside long enough to talk to the others I have indicated. The reason I'm telling you all of this, General, is that I want you to trust me. To trust Utopia. If word of Proteus' existence became public before you were aware of it yourself, I fear that you would be able to convince President Pendleton that such a discovery is the "last straw" against Utopia where America is concerned. As powerful and influential as the United States has been in world affairs in the past, its outright denial of Utopia could be disastrous. Therefore, rather than wage a protracted battle in the court of public opinion, I come to you like this in hopes of gaining your trust and changing your mind about Utopia.

The Stakes

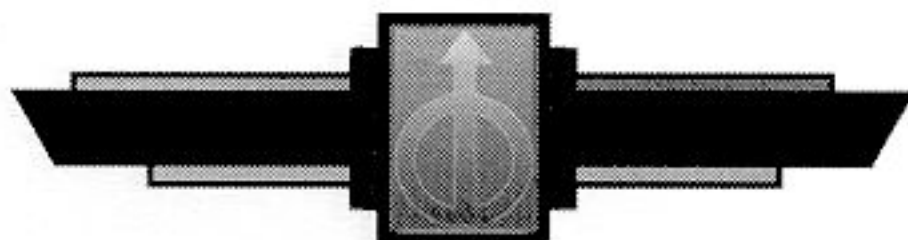
And to answer your inevitable question, yes, you are all now liabilities just as much as I am. If another agent of Proteus finds out about this microdisk or finds out that you have it, Director Thetis will insure that you are dealt with. Be aware that, as long as Proteus' security is not breached, operatives of the security and secrecy sector will do everything they can to find you and silence you. I am aware that some of you have close families and friends, and they will all be investigated and questioned. They might not recognize these interrogations for what they are (Proteus agents are trained to be extremely subtle), but any information they provide will put you in that much more danger. Your phone lines will all be tapped, you will be followed and, one by one, you'll all be brought to one of Proteus' holding facilities and buried. You'll disappear, never to be found or heard from again. If you're lucky.

However, if you represent a decided threat (if, for example, it can be proven that you have talked with each other or members of the media), you'll be eliminated in a much more concrete and permanent way. Worse yet, you may have to watch your name and reputation systematically torn down as agents of Proteus create public "evidence" against you that makes you seem like a dangerous threat. I have seen it happen, and I would not wish that on any of you. I certainly don't wish it on myself, which is why I have gone to such elaborate lengths (which I can't go into here) to make good my escape from Proteus' prying eyes.

As for the rest of you, I can't give you any better advice than to be careful. If I knew more about how Proteus agents operate when on the hunt against liabilities, I could tell you what to expect, but I'm just an analyst and archivist. Once you've read this and shared the information with each other, get rid of the disk and the computer you're playing it on (they'll both be useless anyway). Try not to follow established patterns, as Proteus operatives will be able to tail you. Don't call anyone you think won't be able to handle the stress of having to go to ground. Don't report your findings to anyone within Project Utopia, and don't try to go straight to the media. Who that leaves is each other, and I'm sure that the four of you can decide how to proceed better than I could.

All that leaves is to say, "Good Luck."

— Aaron T. Peloit (a.k.a. "Director Iktome" within Project Proteus)



CHAPTER 5: PROJECT PROTEUS

Personal Letter

Wizard of Oz,

As far as I can tell, Utopia's Sweetheart, is on her way back to Kansas; all turned around nicely. Haven't had a chance to talk to the rest of the Guild or the Good Witch yet, but I'm pretty sure they got on the Yellow-Brick Road after we last talked.

Anyway, if you want a follow-up, let me know. Thetis never asks for one, though, so I wouldn't bother.

Always a pleasure.

— Chiraben

Recorded Conversation

[from a conversation recorded by Director Ozaki, June 2008]

[In Japanese]

• O: Thank you for meeting on such short notice. It's Chiraben. He's begun to get sloppy. He's enjoying his work, and he may be growing careless in adherence to the visibility guidelines. His team's reports about Slider indicate—

• T: You remember the mission parameters, Ozaki-chan. We had to raise a public outcry against her murderer, and the best way to do so involved brutalizing her and leaving her to be found publicly. As well, her death had to be blamed on someone close to her (in order to draw suspicion away from the Project), and our prodigal was the surest bet. If he were implicated in her death, no agency in the world would balk at apprehending him. It neatly wrapped up two liabilities at the same time.

• O: I understand that, but...

• T: But you don't like it.

• O: I don't. Think about the possible backlash we have to deal with now. A *nova* — “the world's sweetheart” the media is calling her — was killed in her own home. How safe do you think it makes people feel to know that that sort of thing is possible? How can they feel safe in their homes under Utopia's umbrella if a Team Tomorrow member isn't even safe in her home? I wish there had been a better way to take care of the situation. An injury leading to “amnesia,” maybe. Maybe we could have brought her in as one of us. Something.

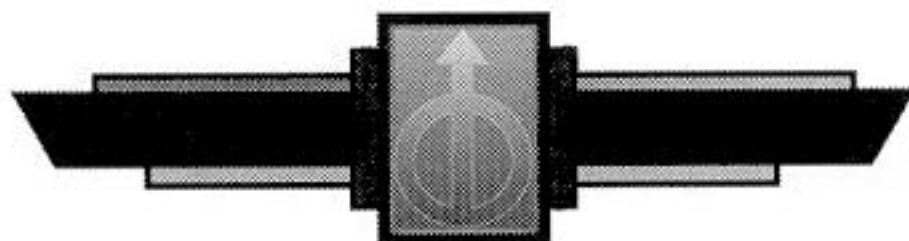
• T: Slider a Proteus operative? You're upset, Ozaki-chan; don't be ridiculous. If I couldn't bring young Mencken into Proteus, how could I possibly induct Miss Landers? You've seen their profiles; you know this as well as I do. As for “amnesia,” you know how resistant Slider would have been to our reprogramming techniques. Her bull-headed sense of determination would have worked against us in the end.

• O: Do you have to say it like that? “Would have” this, “would have” that?

• T: I understand that you liked her. We all did, Director Ozaki, but Jennifer Landers had made herself a liability. And yes, attacking her in her own home was not a tactic I relished myself, but it was a necessary tactic. Chiraben's team had to make sure that all the evidence pointed to the same conclusion; it had to seem that Miss Landers knew and trusted her murderer. Despite how distasteful our agendas can be, we cannot allow anyone (no matter how popular or high-placed) to jeopardize the work we do. Despite our personal preferences. The Project is all that is important.

• O: Should I feel threatened by the threat implicit in that comment?

• T: We are, none of us, immune from responsibility, Ozaki-chan. That wasn't a threat, merely a reminder. You're too important to the Project — and to me — to treat like that.



CHAPTER 5: PROJECT PROTEUS

Private Communiqué

Thetis,

I regret that my first report under this new responsibility to which you have assigned me must be so grim. I have been investigating and sanitizing the mess that's resulted in the wake of the so-called "Slider Scandal." Despite certain setbacks, I have managed to plant the idea that Corbin was involved in Landers' assassination. I will tell you now that I do not expect the idea to catch on. Corbin is too earnest, too popular, and he was a continent away from the scene of the murder. While there may be a small wingnut faction who want to believe that he killed Landers, it's not an idea that rational minds take to well.

On the other hand, he has gone fugitive on us, giving us the upper hand with regards to PR. He forfeits his chance to control the spin if he's underground. We believe him to be somewhere in Europe, but not with a high degree of certainty.

However, I have worse news to report. Director Iktome has disappeared. Although I have not been able to make a connection between Iktome and Corbin, Iktome does have a tenuous connection to Ms. Rousseau and Landers. That connection lies in the fact that Iktome was caught attempting to smuggle a microdisk containing sensitive information to those two and two others. The others include General Thomas Endicott of the United States Army and Count Raoul Orzaiz of the Teragen. Agent Iktome enclosed a statement in the microdisk explaining his betrayal — and he has not revealed any information on the Children or the satellite — but the fact remains that he has committed a security breach of the highest caliber.

Complicating the matter is the fact that each of the three microdisks he created is identical. We recovered one disk from his home and one from his person when we discovered his duplicity, but the third one is unaccounted for. It is unlikely that he gave the missing disk to Jennifer Landers: Iktome warns Landers against contacting Albert Petalan, yet Petalan's report states that Slider came to him with her suspicions after talking to André Corbin, and she made no direct reference to any of the more damning bits of information on the disk. It is also unlikely that Iktome contacted Endicott before the general's death, but it is unclear exactly when he did deliver his missing microdisk. Thus, I have no way to be sure of whom Iktome contacted, and I fear that any attempt to approach Orzaiz would alert him to our presence prematurely. I have started an investigation of General Endicott's home and offices, but the results of that investigation are not yet forthcoming. Surveillance on Castle Orzaiz has been tripled.

The worst news so far is that Iktome, himself, has vanished. A cell of security agents was sent to apprehend him after discovering that he had been making unauthorized electronic mail contact outside the Bahrain complex and unauthorized file retrievals from the secure archive. The agents surrounded him during an orchestrated traffic jam on the Brooklyn Bridge just outside of New York in the United States, but after being searched and handcuffed by an agent from within the New York Police Department, Agent Iktome *leapt* over the side of the bridge. He has not reappeared publicly, and none of our agents has been able to find his body. Judging from the contents of Iktome's microdisk, it is unlikely that he will reemerge in any public venue (if he is even alive), but I would like to assign two cells to the task of tracking him down.

— Rourke

Personal Letter

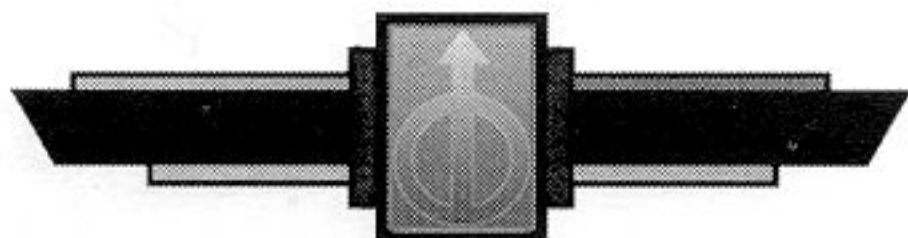
Wizard of Oz,
Aaaaaaallllllmost.

Tracked the Scarecrow to Dorothy's going-away party, but couldn't send him back to Kansas with his new heart. Or wait, it was the Tin Man who wanted the heart, wasn't it? Whatever.

Point is, I had him pegged from over two klicks away with the Zacheus rifle you hooked me up with, but Corbin turned Cowardly Lion. I was sighting him, and I must have dragged the targeting pinpoint across his eye. Either that, or he spotted one of the crowd-control agents among the mourners. Either way, he took off and got away. Being so far removed, I didn't have a chance to find where Corbin went, but I'm still on him. Could be a pain in the ass. He seems to have a lot of powerful friends. Will report when I have him.

And do say Hi to Thetis for me.

— Chiraben



CHAPTER 6: STORYTELLING

Storytellers have a wide range of potential series to choose from in this book. Many may involve conflicts between Utopia and Proteus, or between Utopia and the Aberrants, or even between Utopia and Team Tomorrow. However, there are plenty of other options for **Aberrant** chronicles if that approach doesn't interest you.

Several possible stories highlighting Project Utopia are detailed below as springboards for the Storyteller's planning and imagination. You can use these ideas as described, or adapt them to the particulars of your series concept, style of play, and gaming group.

Utopian Heroes

The simplest type of Project Utopia series is one in which the characters are novas working for the Project as independent do-gooders and heroes. These stories overlook most of the complexity built into the **Aberrant** backstory, but they're an easy way to pull in new players and they're a good option for one-shot games. The characters may or may not belong to Team Tomorrow (depending on how you want to shape the world, there may not even be a Team Tomorrow); they could be kept "in reserve" as part of Team Tomorrow Auxiliary or on retainer to deal with various problems and situations. There's no Project Proteus (or if there is, it's just one story arc in the chronicle, not an overarching theme that the Storyteller uses to organize or support the entire series). Instead, the characters are just heroes doing heroic things. In short, it's pretty much standard 1970s/80s comic-book fare.

Series Aspects

However, it's not as plain vanilla as that description makes it sound. Superpowered gaming has many different facets and aspects that you can explore throughout the course of the series. A few of them include:

Power Level

Are the novas in your series going to be more powerful than normal? Less powerful? About average? That has a big effect on the series. Low-powered novas — those with one or two dots in Mega-Attributes, and no Quantum Powers — have less capacity to affect the world than do high-powered (and potentially high-

Taint) novas. At a certain point, a nova becomes too powerful to be affected by anything short of another nova. Depending upon how quickly you want the characters to reach this point (and typically a point of high Taint as well), you can tinker with the character creation rules to get just the balance you're looking for. You may determine that the characters' eruptions happen slowly, in which case players only get to spend 15 of their Nova Points at character creation, and the other 15 will come later as the characters' nodes adjust to channeling quantum. On the other hand, for a wild one-shot game, you may want to allow the players up to 60 Nova Points to play around with at character creation. Just be aware that these sorts of games need immensely challenging and carefully thought out antagonists or they rapidly devolve into puerile competitions to see whose Quantum Bolt is bigger.

Prominence of the Players' Characters

Novas are, naturally, larger than life — they can do things no normal human could ever possibly do, and even the human-like things they do (e.g., running, lifting, sensing, discerning motives, manipulating others) they can often do much, much better than humans. Every nova in this game world is valued for military, scientific, corporate, religious or other reasons. There is no nova in the **Aberrant** universe who does not have a certain degree of cult status.

However, they don't necessarily *have* to in your series if you don't want them to; it's all in how you set up your game. For example, are your characters the first novas to appear in the world, near the beginning of the eruption boom, or just a handful among thousands of quantum-powered humans? The answer to that question really affects their place in the series. Novas who are the first, or among the first, of their kind will receive a lot more media attention, and a lot more suspicion, than novas who come later, after the world gets used to the concept. Their ability to affect the world may be greater or less than later-generation novas, depending upon the situation. Early novas, for example, won't necessarily have as many Project Utopia resources to call upon (they may even help to get the organization started, if that's a story you want to tell). By the same token, they may not be

so hemmed in by expectations, restrictions and oversight committees.

The Effect of Nova Powers

Similarly, what effect have nova powers had? In the standard **Aberrant** chronicle, they've restructured the world in radical ways; nova contributions have remade it into a far better place than it ever was. Few comic books take such a radical, albeit realistic, approach to the effect of paranormal abilities on the world. In many comic books, the heroes and villains stand at a certain distance from the world around them — they can solve discrete problems, but they never make long-lasting changes; the cataclysmic effects of their conflicts aren't seen in the next issue (somehow, all the damage has been neatly tidied up).

As Storyteller, you can set your series anywhere along this continuum. If you want to follow the standard model, you can do so, but feel free to diverge from it to whatever degree you see fit if that suits your vision. A Project Utopia independent-hero series allows you to do that in ways the standard series doesn't.

Series Themes

Like most game chronicles, stories featuring novas should generally have a theme, whether that theme relates only to a single story (or story arc), or is a dominant feature of the entire series. Standard **Aberrant** chronicles focus on the theme of righteous rebellion — the concept of working outside a corrupt system to change it for the better. Many stories will focus on the extent of the characters' moral authority (how far can they go to accomplish their ends before they become no better than Project Proteus?) or related themes.

Project Utopia-based chronicles can have many different themes, or a mixture of themes that vary from story arc to story arc, depending on what the Storyteller wants to portray and where the characters' actions lead the story. Some common themes include:

Idealism versus Cynicism: The concepts of idealism and its betrayal underlie much of the **Aberrant** storyline, and thus are likely to play a prominent part in your series as well. Project Utopia is founded on, and embodies, certain idealistic notions — but certain parts of the organization are being manipulated from within by people who care little for such lofty principles. Are the characters in your series going to be idealistic, thus setting themselves up for a crushing emotional blow when they realize the truth? Or are they going to start the game already jaded and cynical, with the revelation of Utopia's dark side only serving to reinforce opinions they already held? In either case, will learning the truth affect other aspects of a particular character's personality — make him paranoid, cause him to withdraw from his loved ones, inspire him to try to make things they way they *should* be, or the like? This sort of powerful event should affect a character on many levels, not just make

him want to beat the snot out of the dirty bastards who ruined his dream.

Heroism: What does it really take to be a hero? Why is one nova a hero, and another not? Are the Proteus novas (assuming they, or their equivalent, exist in the series in some form) heroes or not? After all, many of them are simply trying to do what they believe is "best for humanity," even though their actions may seem murderous or even genocidal from a certain perspective. Does heroic intent matter, or only heroic deeds? Who has the final say on what's heroic and virtuous, and what isn't?

Sacrifice: Assuming the chronicle has an ultimate goal (stop the Teragen and Divis Mal; uncover Project Proteus or some other terrible conspiracy), what are the characters willing to sacrifice to accomplish that goal? Are they willing to give of themselves to make the world a better place, even if they won't get to enjoy it? If given the choice to "do the right thing," but at great cost, what will a character choose?

Media Manipulation: "Don't believe everything you hear," the old chestnut goes, and it's particularly true in the world of **Aberrant**. The popular media are being manipulated by certain forces behind the scenes, and thus in turn are manipulating the viewing and listening public into thinking what those "powers behind the throne" want them to. Networks like N! exploit popular interest in novas to make money, while novas use N! and the rest of the media to make themselves extraordinarily glamorous, famous, and rich. Will your characters try to make people see "the truth," only to discover that the truth is often subjective, and that the majority of the slack-jawed masses just want to be entertained? Or will they try to turn the tables for their own benefit, using the media to obtain what they want or get their message out to the millions?

The Noble (?) Opposition

Of course, a good Project Utopia-based **Aberrant** series requires well-developed and intriguing opposition, or else it simply degenerates into a weekly brawl against one group of rogue novas or other. A selection of possible enemies for Utopian novas include:

The Directive: Having a multinational intelligence agency's attentions directed at her should be enough to scare just about any character, nova powers or not. The scope of what such an influential body could do to an individual if it chose is staggering, even if it's fundamentally a benevolent group. It would be easy for leaders to start such a group with the noblest of intentions, only to have it slowly spiral down into true abuses of power and position. It's no secret what Hell paves its roads with. Thus, Utopian novas may wish to investigate the Directive and determine its true intentions, and how trustworthy it is, before it has them fully in its sights. Such a series could become very Cold War-like, with novas pitting their powers against the advanced

technology and military capabilities of the Directive's members in discrete encounters. The chronicle's theme centers on the abuse of power — what constitutes an acceptable use of power, and where does the abuse of power begin?

Teragen Counterterrorism: A much more straightforward series type pits the nova characters directly against the novas of the Teragen movement, including their mysterious leader Divis Mal. That many Teragen “members” aren’t really “evil” at all adds an interesting twist, allowing the Storyteller to focus on the questions of morality and ethics raised above. Still, there will be plenty of straightforward battles with “obviously malign” novas to keep the action junkies happy. The chronicle's theme is the nature of humanity: Is the Null Manifesto correct — are novas above, or at least different from, humanity? If so, what are the implications?

Elites: These greedy, often unprincipled novas make excellent enemies, since they represent the more callous facets of the Utopian novas' souls — the facet that wants to just cut loose with displays of power, the facet that wants to make as much money as possible, regardless of the consequences. Totentanz has killed more novas than any other elite, including one Team Tomorrow member. How does Utopia feel about that? Pursuer wounded Caestus Pax in battle, and Pax can't seem to let that go.... This series, like Teragen counterterrorism, is also action-heavy, but you can mix in a modicum of intrigue by having world governments, or more obscure forces, secretly manipulating the elites from behind the scenes to accomplish a larger goal. The chronicle's theme, as with the Directive, is abuse of power, but on a personal, not geopolitical, level.

Series Kick-Offs

Ground Zero: While going about their business on behalf of Project Utopia — perhaps building a homeless shelter or helping with a terraforming project — the nova characters are attacked by a vicious group of Teragen terrorists. Afterwards they hear that the Null Manifesto was issued at precisely the same time they were attacked. Who is this Divis Mal, and why would he target them for such a special attack (assuming it was targeted at all)?

Eruption: The characters are the world's first novas, or at least among the earliest. Thanks to being trapped together in a highly stressful situation — a bank robbery, terrorist attack, airplane crash, or the like — their nova powers manifest simultaneously. After using their newborn powers to deal with the threat in a confused and awkward fashion, they're approached by an Intervention Team and go through the Project Utopia induction process together.

Mission: Improbable: The characters have all worked for Project Utopia for a while, but never together. However, now Director Laragione has sum-

moned them to a meeting, where he says that he needs their particular nova powers — to accomplish a very important, yet highly unusual, mission.

Scenario Seeds

Petit Mal: Divis Mal issues a second public statement in which he accuses Project Utopia of a wide variety of crimes, abuses of power, and the like. The characters have to investigate both him and the accusations. Diligent following of clues leads them to Madagascar, where they discover that a relatively low-powered nova has set up a scheme in the hopes of tricking them into dismantling their own organization through suspicion and infighting. But other facts uncovered during the scenario may lead them to wonder whether there's a grain of truth in his accusations....

Ialea Acta Est: Interpol reports reach Project Utopia describing a new, ultra-luxurious floating casino that members of the Camparelli-Zukhov megasyndicate, Nakato *gumi*, and/or the Heaven Thunder Triad are using as a front for meetings and transnational criminal operations. The characters have to put on their tuxedos and evening gowns and investigate this sordid state of affairs — encountering along the way the syndicate boss's quantum-powered partners, of course. The Authority meets James Bond meets *The Untouchables*.

Words of a Madman: A raving lunatic approaches the characters. He tells them, in between fits of catatonia and the mutterings of advanced Tourette's Syndrome, that he was once a nova like they, an elite mercenary known as Mirror (a name the characters have heard; he disappeared years ago and hasn't been seen since). He claims that Divis Mal captured him, imprisoned him, and experimented on him — he removed his M-R node without killing him, thus draining him of his powers. He offers to lead the characters to Mal if they agree to try to restore his abilities. When he leads them to Bahrain, things get ugly....

Rebels in the System

This type of series is similar to the basic **Aber-rant** series, with one important difference — the characters remain a part of Project Utopia. After discovering that a possible conspiracy — Project Proteus — exists within the very heart of the Utopian dream, they begin investigating while continuing to act as loyal members of the organization.

This series is rife with conspiracy, cross and double-cross, suspicion, and similar elements. The player character novas (and their allies, if any) will never be entirely sure who they can trust, which side a particular nova (or other employee) “really works for,” or the exact extent of the conspiracy. Conspiracies be-



ing conspiracies, the characters can easily inflate what may be nothing more than a half-dozen or so key employees getting too big for their britches into a globe-spanning cabal manipulating virtually every event of importance.

You can split enemies in this series into two distinct groups: normal enemies and conspiratorial threats. The former are the antagonists the characters are likely to confront simply because they're novas working for Project Utopia; they have no connection to the conspiracy element of the overall storyline (or *do they?*...). Examples include organized crime cartels, Teragen terrorists, Divis Mal, elite criminals and mercenaries, and the like. The latter are the Proteus conspirators themselves and their agents and pawns. They may not oppose the characters as directly, but they're likely to cause just as much trouble for them in the long run.

In order to run this sort of series successfully, you as Storyteller need to do a lot of planning in advance. While it might be amusing, or challenging, to run such a convoluted series in an impromptu fashion, in the end you're likely to forget details, confuse Agent Deep Throat with Agent Skin Deep, and otherwise turn what should be an elegant web of mystery and deceit into a tangled skein of semi-related plot threads. Taking a few hours before the game begins to plan out the Grand Scheme of Things, and at least a few minutes before each game to prepare notes for that individual session, will make the game flow much more smoothly.

Series Kick-Offs

A Chill Down the Spine: The classic kick-off for any conspiracy series is, of course, the discovery of the existence of the conspiracy — or at least of facts that *suggest* that a conspiracy may exist and which literally beg for further investigation. The discovery may be accidental (for example, a player character searching for records on a particular subject hits the wrong key combination and pulls up files he's not supposed to see) or purposeful (a traitor to Proteus anonymously provides one or more characters with documents that reveal the conspiracy's existence).

You must consider carefully what point in time the chronicle is set — do the characters discover Proteus while it's still relatively small and easy to deal with, or after it's been functioning effectively for years and become entrenched? If the latter, the obvious event with which to touch off the series is an investigation into the death of Jennifer "Slider" Landers: assigned to conduct a routine investigation, the characters do their jobs *too* well and end up finding out facts that may be more than they're comfortable with — but which they cannot, in good conscience, ignore. Series set substantially earlier than this may require a bit more finesse to pull off, since the Proteus conspiracy may not yet have become large enough to attract the characters' attention.

Come Play with Us: One of the characters is, unbeknownst to him, sent on a mission for Project Proteus. After performing it successfully (you can run this as a “solo” adventure if you want, or simply assume success as part of the character’s background), he’s offered a position in “an elite group within Project Utopia.” If he accepts, he begins playing a dangerous game (working “undercover” as a loyal member of Proteus while secretly helping his friends investigate it); if not, he and his friends learn of its existence (and have to start dodging assassination attempts, subtle smear campaigns, and the like).

Scenario Seeds

Operation Trenchcoat: A nondescript man wearing a dark trenchcoat approaches one of the characters one night in an innocuous situation (say, while’s out having dinner at a restaurant). With quickly whispered words, he says that he knows about Project Proteus, has been a part of it for years and is willing to help the characters blow the lid on it. Can the characters trust him? If they do, is his information accurate, or is Proteus playing him for a dupe to reveal its enemies?

Utopian Specialists

In most Project Utopia-oriented **Aberrant** series, the characters are novas working for Utopia in a free-floating capacity — they tackle whatever problems Utopia needs them to deal with. However, there are plenty of novas (and normal humans for that matter) working for the Project in more limited capacities. Some of these make fascinating chronicles.

The Peacekeeping Series

In this chronicle, the characters are novas permanently assigned to Project Utopia’s Peacekeeping Department. They are sent to trouble spots around the world to spearhead peacekeeping — or peace-establishment — operations. At various times during the series, they’re likely to find themselves surrounded by opponents on the blood fields of Kashmir, trying to keep a ruthless African dictator from expanding his territory at the expense of his neighbors, or coping with ethnic unrest in India, the Balkans, or the Middle East.

The primary opponents in this sort of series are likely to be mercenary novas (elites), normal human soldiers (sometimes armed with high-tech weapons powerful enough to harm even novas), and perhaps members of the Teragen who are stirring up trouble. A long, running rivalry may develop between the characters and their principal elite enemies, with the series culminating in one last, spectacular battle between

the two groups.

For a real change of pace, perhaps the characters aren’t novas at all — perhaps they’re normal human troops working for the Peacekeeping Department. The characters in such a chronicle would typically be the “special force” assigned to the most dangerous “peacekeeping” missions. They’d infiltrate aggressors’ strongholds to kidnap commanders, destroy aggressors’ assets, and do anything else they could to bring a conflict to a swift halt. Of course, such assignments go far beyond Project Utopia’s brief for peacekeeping missions, so they’d have to work hard to keep their efforts ultra-secret.

The Tech Police

One of Project Utopia’s most crucial, and least pleasant, jobs is to monitor and control the development and distribution of potentially dangerous technology, particularly advanced technology deriving from the “nova boom.” In a Compliance Analyst series, the characters are novas assigned to the Science & Technology Department’s Technological Regulation section to police such technology.

Since conducting cargo and laboratory inspections isn’t exactly the basis for an exciting chronicle, the characters would likely serve as Technological Regulation’s “enforcement squadron.” They would use their powers to find contraband technology development programs being hidden by dishonest corporations and governments, stop aggressors using high-tech weapons, infiltrate and destroy the technology black market, and so forth. This could take the characters to interesting locales; Japan, in particular, does a booming business in blacktech thanks to the Nakato and the shadowy corporation known as Kuro-Tek. The characters’ existence as a team might be public knowledge or a well-kept secret.

Series Kick-Offs

Banana Republic: The *presidente* of a South American country has hired a team of elite novas and initiated an attempt to conquer his neighbors. The characters, novas working for various departments of sections of Project Utopia (perhaps even Team Tomorrow), are called together to stop this aggression. They were chosen because their powers are well-suited to dealing with the various elites known to be in the field (though there may be a few others their superiors haven’t heard about yet...).

Stepping into the Breach: The characters, members of other departments in Project Utopia, are good friends with a group of novas assigned to the Peacekeeping Department. When their friends are massacred in a sneak attack by elite novas helping the Chinese government fight for control of Kashmir, they transfer to Peacekeeping for a chance to avenge their friends’ deaths and carry on their work.

No Sale: After seeing devastatingly powerful high-tech weapons kill a number of novas (perhaps during a peacekeeping mission or battle against Kuro-Tech), the characters become motivated to stop the illegal traffic in high-tech weapons, so they transfer into Technological Regulation.

Scenario Seeds

Stoned: Police in a major city discover dozens of comatose teenagers and junkies around the city. It's soon determined that they've taken a drug that causes profound neurological changes, some similar to those effected by the Mazarin-Rashoud node. Suspecting that a pharmaceutical corporation or cartel laboratory has developed a new drug with information derived from studies of nova physiology, Project Utopia sends in the Tech Police.

Islands Getaway: The novas of Peacekeeping Department are sent to the Spratly Islands to quell another conflict there. These islands in the South China Sea, which lie atop vast oil and natural gas deposits, are being claimed — and fought over — by China, the Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Brunei, each of which has hired elites to enforce its “historical rights.” The characters have to talk or fight their way out of a six-way fight — and without using any nova powers that might blast deep enough into the earth to touch off pockets of natural gas.

Bungle in the Jungle (a joint Peacekeeping/Compliance Analyst adventure): A rebel group in the Democratic Republic of Congo has purchased high-tech weapons through the black market and is using them in an effort to conquer the country. Their actions are seriously destabilizing the entire region. Peacekeeping and the Tech Police are sent in jointly to shut the rebels down. But what happens when the characters learn that the rebels' grievances with the government are legitimate?

The Team Tomorrow Series

Storytellers who want the characters in their chronicles to start off at the top of the heap should run a series in which those characters belong to Team Tomorrow, Project Utopia's most famous team of novas. Such a chronicle can combine elements from virtually every other series type described here, depending on how you run things.

Before the chronicle begins, you need to establish the characters' roles within Team Tomorrow. In most series, they'll start out as new recruits or members of the Auxiliary team. This gives them a chance to



grow into greater roles as the chronicle develops and they gain experience. However, in some chronicles they may start out as the leaders of one of the teams. If so, you need only replace some or all of the team members listed in Chapter Three with the characters.

Alternatively, the characters may be the nucleus of an all-new branch of Team Tomorrow — Team Tomorrow-South America or Team Tomorrow-Russia, for example. That gives them the chance to shine on their own, without having to live (completely) in the shadow of the likes of Caestus Pax.

The Team Tomorrow Auxiliary comprises novas who are in training to become members of T2M and novas from other sectors of Utopia whose powers may make them useful from time to time to the Team, but not enough for them to be a full-fledged member of Team Tomorrow. In some cases, their control over their powers may not be up to par or their powers may be a little exotic. If the primary Teams Tomorrow are busy or, worse, missing, the heroes of the Auxiliary are called in to handle crises.

Having characters who are a part of Team Tomorrow gives you the chance to introduce elements of politics and factionalism into your series. Like any other group of powerful, often egotistical individuals, Team Tomorrow experiences personality clashes, inter-team and intra-team politicking, and the like. Since Team Tomorrow often has to present a unified front to the world (see below), a lot of arguing and debate goes on behind the scenes as the group makes up its mind. Characters forced to toe the line against their better judgment may soon start to question just what, if anything, motivates their teammates to make the choices they do.

Another important element of the Team Tomorrow chronicle is the absurdist side of being a combination superhero/media star. When not saving the world (or some small part of it) from war, famine, pestilence, pollution, the Teragen or random rogue novas, they're busy cutting licensing agreements, appearing in movies, on the OpNet, in commercials, dealing with groupies, critics and stalkers, and having lunch in five-star restaurants with stars of the government or media, and so forth. The contrasts between their "day jobs" and personal lives — if indeed a contrast it is — provides you with scenario fodder and plain old series "color."

Lastly, Team Tomorrow novas have to help preserve the spin-doctored image of Project Utopia, of which they are a key part. They can't be seen to feud in public and must, even in light of the recent scandals, support Project Utopia and its goals unflinchingly. A low-combat series could explore some of the difficulties of leading such a life.

Series Kick-Offs

Tryouts: The characters are all competing, along with many other novas, for a slot in Team Tomorrow

(or perhaps to fill the roster of a new branch of the Team, as described above). They have to deal with behind-the-scenes treachery by novas willing to cheat to get in, favoritism on the part of the judges and honest competition — all while winning the tryout and earning a place in the world's premiere nova group.

Emergency!: The characters, independent novas all, respond to a major emergency at the same time as one branch of Team Tomorrow. They comport themselves so well that they're asked to fill in for the injured or killed members of the Team, or to establish a new branch of the team.

Scenario Seeds

Battle of the Burgers: Two Tomorrowites with a long history of subtle (or perhaps not so subtle) antagonism to each other both announce within a week that they're establishing new restaurant franchises. The two begin fighting in the rough-and-tumble fast food arena, the conflict divides the Team, and the characters have to find a way to heal the breach.

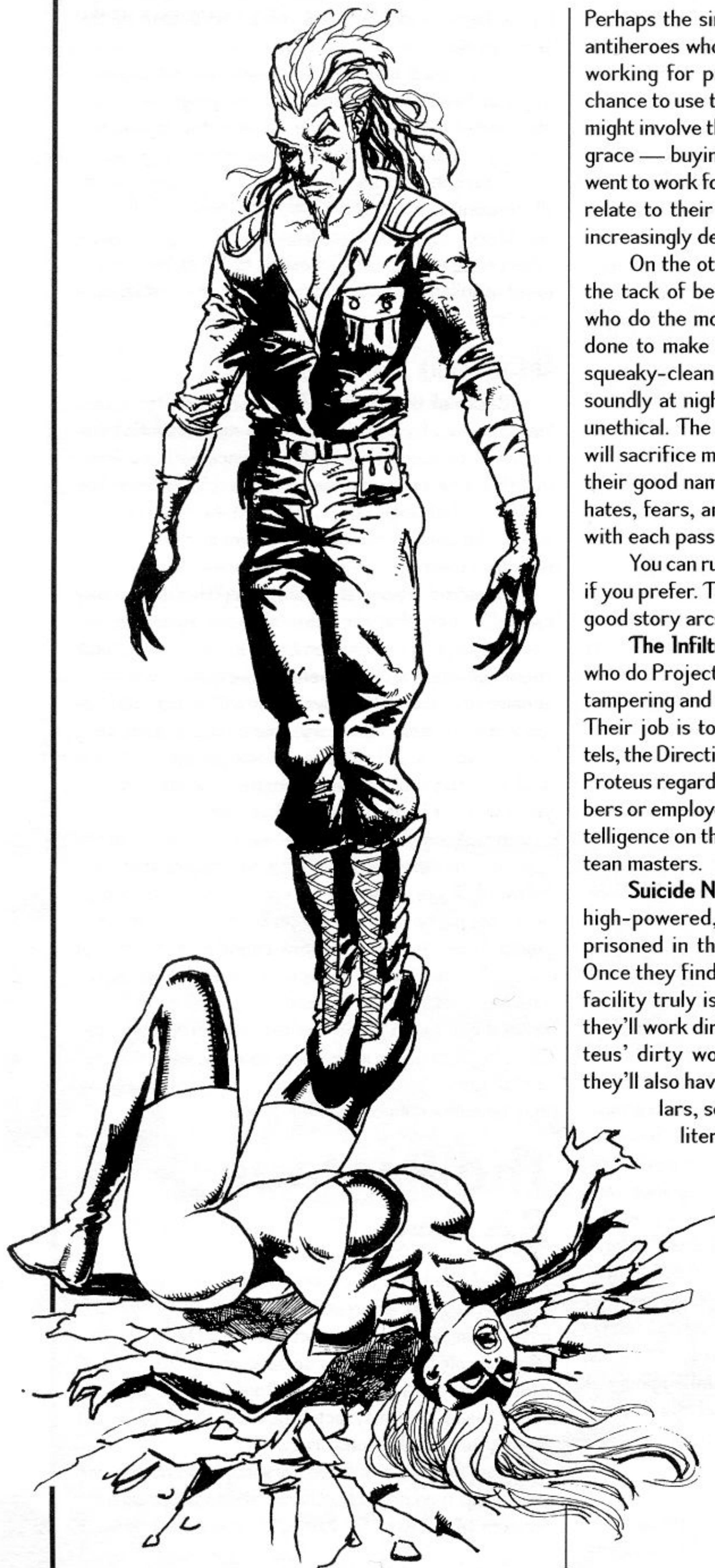
Beautiful Nova Dates Hollywood Hunk!: A seamy tabloid reports that a member of Team Tomorrow — hopefully a player character, but if not then a Narrator character who's a close friend of the characters — is engaged in a scandalous love affair with a married Hollywood superstar. This story, true or not, is tarnishing the character's and the Team's image; how will they deal with the tabloid (and its battery of pit-bull lawyers) without further hurting their rep?

Breaking Ranks: In the wake of the Jennifer Landers murder scandal and the revelations that have followed, Team Tomorrow has pulled together to support "the party line" and present a unified front to the media. However, one or more characters, friends of André Corbin or other novas now labeled "Aberrants," wonders if there isn't at least a germ of truth to the accusations being made against Project Utopia. The characters set out to investigate secretly, while still trying to act as responsible Team members whenever they're in the public spotlight.

The Proteus Series

Perhaps the most intriguing option for a Project Utopia-oriented **Aberrant** series is to play the "bad guys" themselves — Project Proteus. The characters take the roles of novas (or sometimes normal humans) who work for Proteus doing Utopia's uglier work. In some cases, you may actually want them to be the people running the conspiracy.

Depending upon their personalities and the way you set up the chronicle, characters can approach the concept of working for Project Proteus several ways.



Perhaps the simplest way to deal with it is as cynical antiheroes who don't really care which "side" they're working for provided they're paid well and get the chance to use their powers. The theme of such a series might involve the characters working their way back to grace — buying back the souls they pawned when they went to work for the conspiracy, so to speak. Or it could relate to their fight to stay on top of the heap in an increasingly degenerate world.

On the other hand, the players may want to take the tack of being "the true good guys" — the ones who do the morally questionable work that *has* to be done to make the world a better place, allowing the squeaky-clean members of Team Tomorrow to sleep soundly at night, knowing they haven't done anything unethical. The theme here is sacrifice; the characters will sacrifice much of their personal lives, and perhaps their good names, just to make sure that a world that hates, fears, and despises them gets a little bit better with each passing day.

You can run several types of Proteus "sub-series" if you prefer. These sub-series, which would also make good story arcs in an ordinary series, include:

The Infiltrators: The characters aren't the folks who do Project Proteus' true dirty work, like evidence tampering and assassination; they're a more subtle lot. Their job is to infiltrate the Teragen, the crime cartels, the Directive or any other organization that Project Proteus regards as a threat. Posing as legitimate members or employees of that organization, they gather intelligence on the group that they forward to their Protean masters.

Suicide Novas: The characters in this series are high-powered, high-Taint novas who have been imprisoned in the Nova Evaluation Center in Bahrain. Once they find out just how inhuman and horrible the facility truly is, Director Ozaki offers them a deal: if they'll work directly for him, doing the dirtiest of Proteus' dirty work, he will release them. Of course, they'll also have to wear tamper-proof explosive collars, so that anyone who gets out of line will, literally, lose his head....

Team Yesterday: Most Proteus novas and operatives work alone — that's usually the best way to keep them from being discovered. However, now that rumors are flying about Project Utopia and people are becoming suspicious, Project Proteus decides that it needs a "tactical squad" to deal with the high-powered threats to the organization. The characters are "drafted" into that organization.

Series Kick-Offs

Team Tryouts: Ozaki learns of the characters and decides that he may want the characters to work for Project Proteus, but he needs to make sure that the characters are ruthless enough to get things done. By pulling strings and orchestrating a few events, he arranges “tests” for the characters — events that they have to deal with. If they do so with sufficient discretion, they’ll be offered a position in Proteus; if not, they’ll be left to wonder what was going on (and perhaps to investigate on their own).

The Corrupters: As their first mission for Proteus, the characters, posing as legitimate members of Project Utopia, have to “recruit” newly-erupted novas and persuade them to come to a Proteus-controlled Rashoud lab for “testing” and indoctrination.

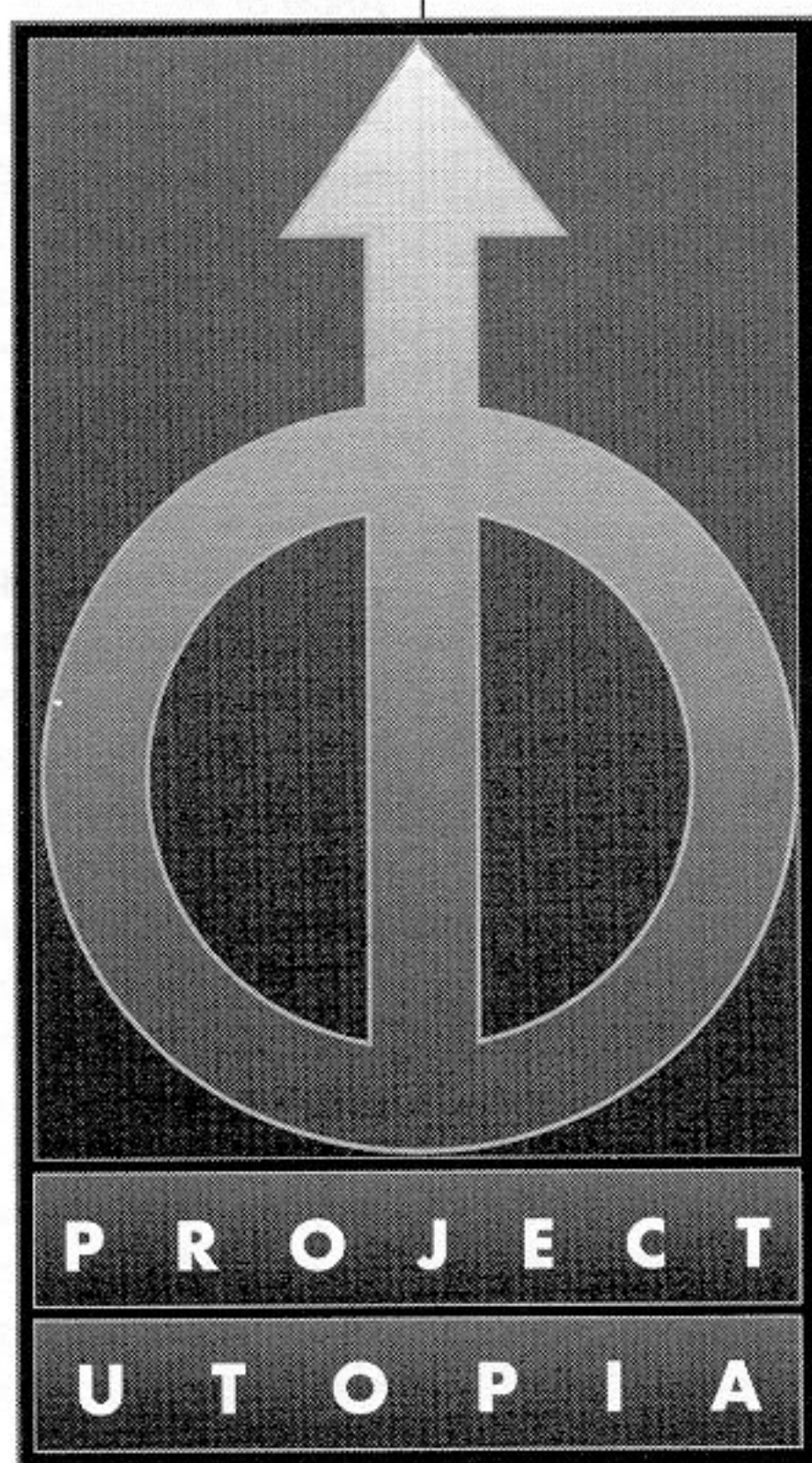
Scenario Seeds

The Big Hit: Director Laragione has decided that, despite Aeon’s assurances, Proteus is more dangerous than helpful and must be dismantled. Director Thetis has other plans. The characters have to “eliminate” him before he can reveal what he’s chosen to do to anyone; if they can’t get to him in time, they’ll also have to take

care of anyone he’s talked to. Don’t forget that Laragione has access to the most powerful novas in the world, including all four Teams Tomorrow, and various Utopian novas like Antaeus. Laragione’s security team and body guards are second to none; unless the characters are very experienced, they won’t have the slightest chance of actually assassinating the Director, but what happens when they get caught trying?

Groundbreaking: The increasing levels of Taint in many Utopia novas mean that Bahrain has too many potential inmates to handle. The characters have to scout out and acquire the land to build another facility of its kind (typically by cutting an under-the-table deal with a corrupt official in a country not known for its respect for human rights), then build it — all without the media or anyone else finding out. This, after all, will be the place that makes the Nova Evaluation Center look like Club Med, so keeping it secret is absolutely vital.

Aberrant Smash: Project Proteus obtains a solid lead on the location of André Corbin and several other prominent Aberrants. The characters are sent in to “deal with” the renegades as quickly and quietly as possible. Unfortunately, they seem to be hiding out in an office building in Manhattan....



APPENDIX

Project Utopia

Moses Miller

Moses Miller's history can be found in Chapter 2.

Nature: Analyst

Allegiance: Project Utopia

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5, Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 4, Charisma 4, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3

Abilities: Awareness 3, Brawl 1, Bureaucracy 4, Command 5, Computer 5, Engineering 5, Etiquette 3, Firearms 5, Intimidation 2, Investigation 4, Linguistics 1, Martial Arts 5, Rapport 1, Science 5, Stealth 2, Style 2, Subterfuge 3

Backgrounds: Allies 2, Backing 3, Contacts 3, Resources 3, Quantum 2, Quantum Pool 24, Willpower 7, Taint 0

Powers: Mega-Strength • (Crush), Mega-Dexterity •• (Accuracy, Rapid Strike), Mega-Intelligence ••• (Analyze Weakness, Eidetic Memory, Mathematical Savant, Mental Prodigy: Engineering, Mental Prodigy: Scientific), Mega-Wits 1 (Enhanced Initiative x 3), Stun Attack (Electrical) •••



Athena Boyd

Born of highly proper and emotionally cold parents, Athena Boyd's primary path to recognition was academic excellence. Her above-average intelligence and maniacal work ethic gained her degrees in psychology and communications by the time she was 19 and an MBA in management from Harvard Business School by the age of 23. She believes she erupted during her final year of business school, but she can't pinpoint the exact date. Upon graduation, she began a career as a consultant for businesses that dealt with proprietary information and needed to maintain a high level of security. Her nova abilities served her well. Athena was always able to sniff out infiltrators and industrial saboteurs in any organization, earning her nicknames like "Little Miss Everywhere," "the Harpy," and "the Relentless and Omnipresent Bitch Angel of Vengeance."

When Project Utopia needed to staff its Internal Affairs Inspection Teams, Athena applied, revealed her nova status (which she otherwise prefers to keep secret) and got the job. Her friendly yet slightly aloof manner keeps her professional boundaries firmly in place, and she is able to attend to even messy and complicated Internal Affairs difficulties with ease. She has again earned herself a spate of nicknames, although the most prevalent one throughout Utopia is "the Hound."

Boyd is unique in that she is simultaneously idealistic and savvy. She knows that the world is not perfect, but she enjoys making it more so. She fancies herself a hunter. Her prey are any who leak information or abuse their power. She takes joy in hunting down those who think they're clever enough to get away with malfeasance. Proving them wrong is her greatest joy.

Her investigations have led her to discover the existence of Project Proteus, which she finds reprehensible. She's willing to overlook its existence for the time being, but in the fullness of time she will take it upon herself to wield a one-woman war against Proteus. It remains to be seen how successful that war will be.

Project Utopia employees (including Tomorrowites) who misuse their authority in any way have cause to fear Athena Boyd, and she can smell deceit and sense wrongdoing at 20 paces.



Nature: Critic

Allegiance: Project Utopia

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5, Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 4, Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4

Abilities: Academics 5, Awareness 3, Bureaucracy 4, Command 4, Computer 2, Endurance 3, Etiquette 5, Firearms 1, Investigation 4, Linguistics 3, Resistance 3, Science 2, Stealth 2, Style 2, Subterfuge 5

Backgrounds: Allies 1, Backing 3, Resources 3

Quantum 2, Quantum Pool 24, Willpower 5, Taint 0

Powers: Mega-Dexterity ••• (Physical Prodigy, Catfooted), Mega-Perception ••• (Analytic Taste, Electromagnetic Vision, Ultraperipheral Perception), Mega-Intelligence •• (Mental Prodigy: Investigative, Mental Prodigy: Tactical), Mega-Wits •• (Lie Detector)

Dr. James R. Bernhardt

Job-related stress had begun to make Dr. Bernhardt's life miserable. As a respected surgeon, he had many responsibilities and he held people's lives in his hands. One day, Bernhardt got a very special patient. Her name didn't mean anything to him at first, but when her father came to him and introduced himself as Luciano Camparelli, Bernhardt's stress level went through the roof. Camparelli caught Bernhardt alone in his office and, with a disturbing earnestness, he impressed upon Bernhardt that if his daughter didn't survive, neither would the doctor.

The young woman had a tumor in her brain that required a complex surgical procedure to remove. Bernhardt had performed less than a handful of them in his career. He considered turning the job over to someone else, but somehow he knew that if the woman died

under someone else's knife, he'd still "pay." Bernhardt bit the bullet and put on his surgical gown and mask. The procedure progressed normally, until the woman's blood pressure dropped abruptly. She flatlined.

Bernhardt panicked. He knew that her death meant his death as well — and probably the deaths of all his family members. He felt his face grow hot and a tingling lit up his hands. Bernhardt's M-R node took over where he had failed. Rushing with preternatural speed and dexterity, Bernhardt pulled the woman out of the grip of death and successfully removed the tumor.

Word of Bernhardt's amazing surgical skills spread among the medical community and Project Utopia approached him. Bernhardt had never subscribed to the haughty self-righteousness of some of his fellow doctors. He went into medicine for the money. Nevertheless, Utopia offered him a much better salary than any hospital ever could. Now he spends his time between Bahrain, New York and Venice.



Nature: Bravo

Allegiance: Project Utopia/Proteus

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5, Perception 5, Intelligence 5, Wits 5, Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4

Abilities: Awareness 3, Command 3, Etiquette 4, Linguistics 3, Medicine 5 (surgery), Rapport 4, Subterfuge 3, Style 2

Backgrounds: Allies 2, Backing 3, Contacts 2, Resources 3, Quantum 2, Quantum Pool 24, Willpower 4, Taint 0

Powers: Mega-Dexterity •• (Accuracy, Fast Tasks), Mega-Perception • (Electromagnetic Vision), Mega-Intelligence •• (Mental Prodigy: Medical), Luck ••, Telekinesis •••

Michael Damien MacVane, Ph.D.

All his life, fairy tales and mythology had fascinated Michael. He grew up in a small, gray village in eastern Scotland, yearning to explore the world. His first chance came when he went away to college. He took up studies in Archeology and focused on an academic pursuit of lost gods. During his doctorate studies, Michael acquired a number of grants that allowed him to travel to various dig sites around the world. At one such site, he found evidence of an ancient civilization hidden deep in the rain forests of the Congo. But Michael was patient. He finished his doctorate and worked for several years to acquire the funding he would need to make the expedition. If he was right, he reasoned, the riches he would find in "The Lost Valley," as he termed it, would bring him as close to godhood as he could imagine.

Michael hired locals to carry his equipment through the dangerous rain forest. By the time they reached the spot he had marked on his map, more than half of his team had been killed. To make matters worse, the valley held no great monuments to gods or even honed rock to indicate that anyone had ever been there. Disheartened, but unwilling to give up, Michael made camp. Several days later, he discovered a cave with strange, primitive symbols carved around the entrance. He and his entourage entered. The going was rough and Michael lost two more of his caravan in deep caverns. But, he persisted. Eventually, he found something remarkable. One wall of a chamber, he discovered ancient writings like those at the cave entrance. It didn't take him long before he realized that the treasure was hidden behind a giant boulder that must be moved.

They tried, all of them shoving and grunting together, to move the boulder, but to no avail. They tried everything they could, using rope, pulleys and levers, but the boulder wouldn't budge. Michael grew more and more obsessed with moving the rock. He beat the other men. He cursed and threw things. He cursed his own small, weak body and hated himself for being a slim, pale academic. Faced with the most frustrating moment of his life, Michael cracked. He shoved so hard on the rock that he threw his shoulder out of joint. The pain shot through him and he erupted. With a rush of superhuman strength, Michael moved the boulder.

Inside the cave, he found treasure, but not the kind he had wanted. He found no gold nor anything he could take out with him. He did, however, find cave paintings, an archeological masterpiece. It made Michael famous and somewhat wealthier, but only the activation of his M-R node brought him closer to godhood. Michael joined Utopia in order to hone his abilities and learn exactly what he could gain from them.



Nature: Hedonist

Allegiance: Project Utopia

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5, Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4

Abilities: Academics 3 (Archeology), Arts 3, Awareness 4, Computer 3, Interrogation 3, Investigation 5, Medicine 1, Science 2, Subterfuge 2

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Backing 4, Eufiber 5, Influence 5, Node 1

Quantum 2, Quantum Pool 24, Willpower 4, Taint 2

Powers: Mega-Strength •• (Lifter), Mega-Appearance • (Awe-Inspiring), Quantum Conversion ••, Gravity Control ••

Team Tomorrow

Pratima "Splash" Basham

The Mari River runs south through India, and a number of small communities flourish along its banks. Pratima grew up in one of these, secluded from most of the intrusions of the modern world. She erupted on her wedding day when the boat driven by her new husband ran into a rock in the river and sank. Pratima was nudged ashore by waves, but her husband did not survive. Pratima noticed her remarkable control over water as soon as she woke up and saw the waters swirling around her. Were it not for her father, a retired doctor, Pratima may never have left her home village, but once he contacted colleagues in Bombay, representatives of the nascent

Project Utopia were there within a day to take her to a Rashoud facility. It was difficult to leave her village, but Pratima's power came with a sense of responsibility and moral obligation. She was intelligent, driven, attractive and powerful: precisely what Project Utopia was looking for in the way of a PR project they'd been working on called Team Tomorrow.

Pratima worked with Caestus Pax (whom she dislikes) for years just to be a team player, but when T2M A/P formed, she volunteered to lead it, partly to be closer to her family and partly to get away from Pax's raging ego.

She is pleased to be a part of Team Tomorrow, and her loyalty to Project Utopia is unswerving, but recent rumors of Utopia's ethically challenged behavior have made her wonder if her immense powers are being used as honorably as they could be.



Nature: Paragon

Allegiance: Team Tomorrow-Asia/Pacific

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4, Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 4, Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4

Abilities: Academics 4, Athletics 2, Awareness 3, Biz 2, Bureaucracy 2, Command 5, Drive 2, Endurance 3, Engineering 3, Etiquette 3, Investigation 2, Martial Arts 4, Medicine 2, Perform 2, Rapport 2, Resistance 3, Science 2, Stealth 2, Survival 2, Style 3, Subterfuge 2

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Attunement 5, Backing 4, Eufiber 5, Followers 5, Influence 5, Resources 5, Quantum 5, Quantum Pool 30, Willpower 7, Taint 2

Powers: Mega-Dexterity •••• (Physical Prodigy, Rapid Strike), Mega-Charisma •• (Soothe), Bodymorph ••• (Water), Elemental Mastery (Water) •••• (Imprison, Lethal Blast, Storm, Propel), Weather Manipulation •••• (Fog, Lightning Bolt, Weather Alteration, Wind riding)

Peter "Thorn" Knorr

September 16, 2002: Peter Knorr was the leader of the Wolfpack, a cadre of eight highly trained baseline mercenaries who'd accepted an assignment in Asia. They were to fight alongside nova elites on behalf of Pakistan in the Kashmir Conflict. They knew it would be rough, but they weren't expecting it to be a suicide mission. It was. Not one of the seven men he led survived the first hour of combat against the elites. Knorr was in shock and looked like easy mop-up work for the elite who was bringing up the enemy's rear. The nova was approaching Knorr to deliver a death blow when Knorr reached out to the earth beneath his enemy and made it stir. Enormous vines with sharp thorns shot up from the soil and tangled the elite long enough for Knorr to rip the nova apart with his bare hands. It was his only revenge for those he lost. Knorr survived and found his way back to base, never speaking a word about what happened to his men.

After returning to the U.K., Knorr heard about Project Utopia. He visited the Rashoud facility in London, where he learned to control his abilities. He worked in Utopia's Ecological Engineering sector assisting with terraforming for a few years, but he needed something that offered more action. He was eventually invited to join Team Tomorrow, taking the name "Thorn."

While his nova abilities aren't especially potent, Knorr's understanding of group dynamics, tactics and combat, as well as his ability to lead others, have helped him rise to the leadership position of Team Tomorrow Europe.

Pax has his doubts about Thorn's place on Team Tomorrow. He thinks that Knorr is overly enthusiastic about conflict and enters dangerous situations too readily. If the other members of T2M-Eu weren't so devoted to him, Pax would have replaced Knorr months ago.

When not "on" with Team Tomorrow or doing PR, Knorr is quiet, some would say haunted. He sees a therapist twice a week to deal with the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder that has been his cross to bear for the last six years. He has vowed to minimize the effects of nova conflict on baseline populations, because he has seen firsthand the horror that results. Though he has never spoken of the Wolfpack to the other members of T2M, the names of his fallen comrades are a litany in his mind, recited over and over.



Nature: Leader

Allegiance: Team Tomorrow-Europe

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5, Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 5, Charisma 5, Manipulation 3, Appearance 5

Abilities: Academics 2, Athletics 4, Awareness 4, Command 5, Drive 4, Endurance 5, Etiquette 3, Firearms 5, Martial Arts 5, Medicine 3, Melee 4, Pilot 4, Rapport 2, Resistance 5, Stealth 4, Style 1, Survival 5,

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Attunement 5, Backing 5, Eufiber 5, Followers 5, Influence 5, Resources 4

Quantum 4, Quantum Pool 28, Willpower 8, Taint 0

Powers: Mega-Strength ••• (Crush), Mega-Stamina •••• (Durability, Regeneration, Resiliency x2), Mega-Wits ••••• (Synergy) Mega-Charisma ••• (Commanding Presence), Plant Mastery •••, Immobilize (Thorny Vines) •••

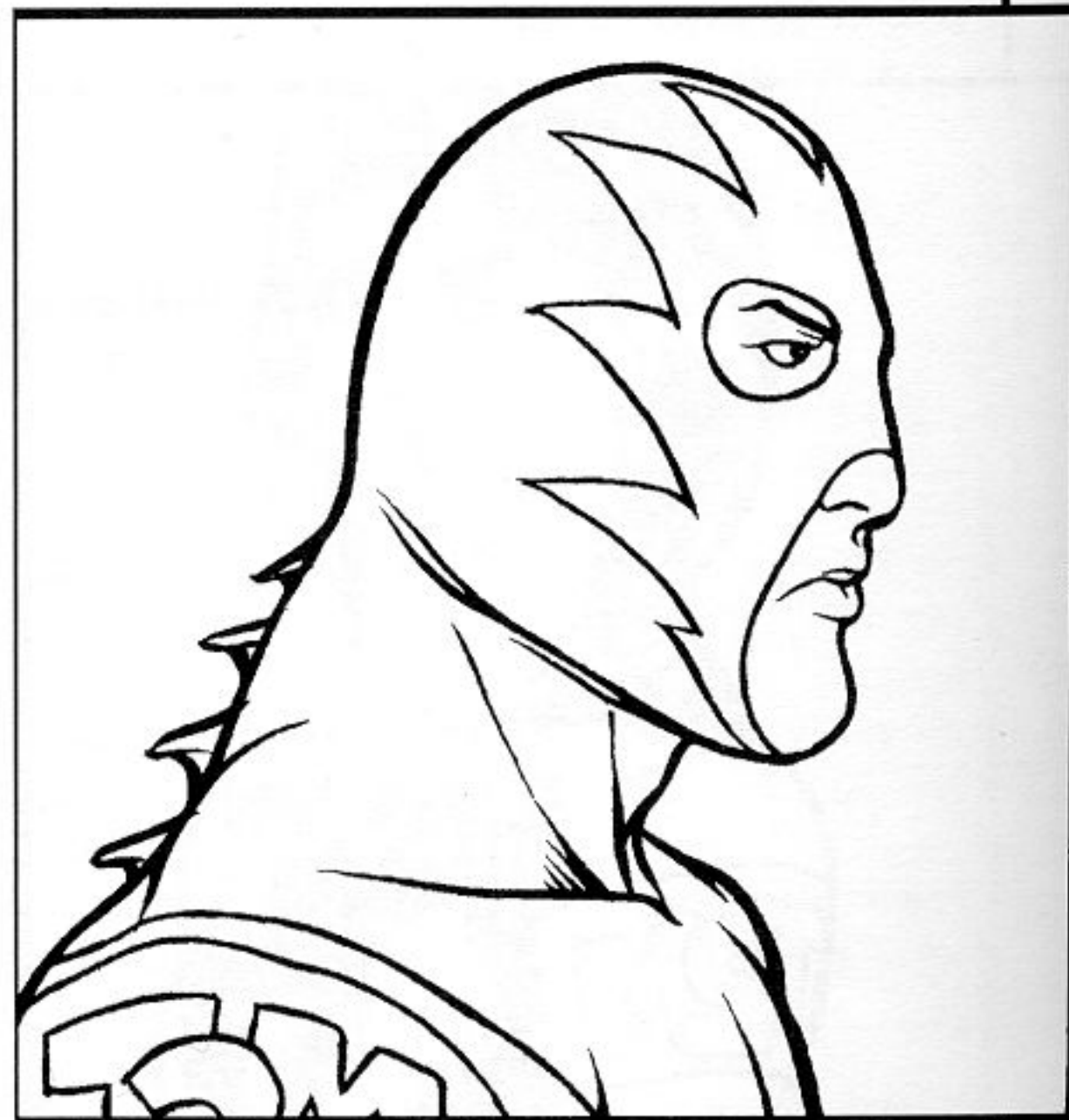
Ricardo Montoya-Bernal

Ricardo grew up in the south of Mexico, the oldest of five children. He was the only one in his family with any ambition at all, consequently it was up to him to work to provide food for his family. While he resented the situation that put him in, he felt it was his duty, but they would have to stand on their own feet eventually. That time came sooner than expected. He was challenged to a fight one day at work, and he declined, only to be jumped by his challenger. Bernal, angry with his attacker, with his family, with his country and with his life in general, erupted and tossed the bully into the ocean 50 meters away. Montoya-Bernal was fired for his troubles by his nervous employer, but he didn't care. He knew what the appearance of nova powers meant. He left his family to fend for themselves for once and joined the XWF, where he made an enormous sum of money very rapidly. To his dismay, however, he

quickly found the quality of the people associated with that organization to be questionable (at best) and beneath contempt (at worst). By that point, he had established a name for himself, and when Team Tomorrow needed attractive new faces, they invited Ricardo to join the team.

Montoya-Bernal has since developed some problems with Taint, but his friendly manner and immense talents have kept anyone from bothering him about it. In the meantime, he allows the parapsychicians at T2M-Am to poke, prod and study him to determine what, if anything, can be done to help him.

Montoya-Bernal occasionally receives letters from his family asking for money, but he throws the letters away. He believes that if they want something, it's time for them to earn it.



Nature: Gallant

Allegiance: Team Tomorrow Americas

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5, Perception 5, Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Appearance 4, Manipulation 4, Charisma 4

Abilities: Arts 2, Athletics 5, Awareness 2, Biz 1, Brawl 5, Command 4, Drive 4, Endurance 5, Etiquette 2, Firearms 3, Interrogation 1, Intimidation 3, Intrusion 2, Legerdemain 4, Martial Arts 3, Might 5, Pilot 4, Rapport 3, Resistance 3, Stealth 2, Streetwise 2, Style 4, Survival 3

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Attunement 5, Backing 4, Eufiber 5, Followers 5, Influence 5, Resources 4

Quantum 4, Quantum Pool 28, Willpower 8, Taint 5 (green skin, spiny "fins" on calves and forearms)

Powers: Mega-Strength ••••• (Crush, Shockwave), Mega-Dexterity ••••• (Accuracy, Flexibility, Physical Prodigy), Mega-Wits •• (Quickness, Synergy), Bounce ••••• (See below), Flight ••, Premonition •••••, Luck •••••, Psychic Shield •••••

Delaney "Firefly" Croft-Martin

Delaney Croft-Martin was the richest, most beautiful, most popular debutante in Herndon, a wealthy suburb of New York. As the only daughter of James R. and Cynthia Croft-Martin, it was to be expected.

Erupting at a charity benefit, however, was not expected. Her parents were horrified, but Delaney was ecstatic. She had long been ready to toss aside the dull life of a socialite for something more exciting. By talking with certain persuasive and well-connected friends of her parents, Croft-Martin was able to schmooze her way into Team Tomorrow's Auxiliary team.

For Delaney Croft-Martin, becoming Firefly and joining Team Tomorrow was like being gifted with sight after a lifetime of blindness. Freed from the strict social guidelines that ruled her life in Herndon, she has plunged into an "extreme" lifestyle, taking colossal risks on assignment just for the adrenaline rush. Thus far, she has somehow managing to emerge intact. The only drawback to her life as a member of Team Tomorrow is that she is no longer the center of attention. Delaney Croft-Martin does not excel at being a team player, and she is often jealous of the attention some of the more famous or powerful Team Tomorrow novas receive. For the moment, it is a price she is willing to pay.



Nature: Thrillseeker

Allegiance: Team Tomorrow Auxiliary

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3, Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 5

Abilities: Academics 4, Arts 2, Athletics 3, Awareness 2, Biz 2, Command 2, Computer 2, Drive 3, Endurance 3, Firearms 3, Intimidation 1, Intrusion 2, Martial Arts 3, Rapport 4, Resistance 3, Stealth 4, Streetwise 1, Style 5, Survival 2

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Attunement 5, Backing 4, Eufiber 5, Followers 5, Influence 5, Node 3

Quantum 3, Quantum Pool 26, Willpower 7, Taint 1

Powers: Mega-Dexterity •• (Fast Tasks), Mega-Wits •• (Enhanced Initiative x2, Quickness x3), Mega-Charisma • (First Impression), ESP ••••, Bioluminescence ••••, Flight ••••, Absorption ••• (energy attacks converted to Dexterity), Armor •••

Ichiko "Geisha" Iko

Ichiko was the ideal little girl; she was loving, pleasant and witty. Her parents decided early that once she was old enough, she would become one of the *geisha*, the trained performers and companions at teahouses. Ichiko was honored to fulfill the wishes of her parents, though she didn't realize exactly where that road would lead her.

She studied the ways of the *geisha*. True to her nature, Ichiko learned quickly. She studied singing, dancing and instrumental music. She became well-versed in traditional *kabuki* and *noh* theater styles, as well as in Japanese literature and history. She had always been polite, but now she learned the finest points of etiquette and conversation. She became skilled at making others feel witty and interesting, even when they were introverted or boring.

Ichiko went through her *erigaishi*, the ceremony where a *maiko* becomes a full-fledged *geisha*, when she was 18. She enjoyed her work, and the teahouse customers enjoyed her company. In addition, she was often hired to entertain at private or corporate parties. It was on one such evening that a high-ranking member of the Nakato gumi became intoxicated and divulged some rather compromising information about the Yakuza to Ichiko. Normally Ichiko would simply keep quiet about such indiscretion, but in this case the information was about activities which were highly illegal.

Troubled, Ichiko decided to inform the authorities and thought nothing more of the incident until a few nights later. Four assailants dragged her out of bed, apologized to her and told her that she would have to die because of her regrettable lack of discretion. The stress of her life-and-death situation caused Ichiko's M-R node to erupt, and she calmly explained to the men that she'd only done her duty. She politely asked them if they would please allow her to live. They released her and left, but only after they helped her pack and tidy up her room.

Ichiko suspected that she must be a nova and she contacted Project Utopia. She left Japan with a great deal of information on the Nakato. While her combat skills were non-existent, she had long wished to become a part of Team Tomorrow. It was impossible for anyone to say no to Ichiko, and she was assigned to the team shortly. Since then, she has become the single most skilled diplomat on the planet, using her nova powers to bring peace to some of the most volatile situations in history.

While her abilities do not seem to immediately qualify her for a position on Team Tomorrow, T2M-A/P thinks of Ichiko as its secret weapon. Her ability to have others, including her enemies, do her bidding for her — with no hint of violence — makes Ichiko one of the more powerful and highly paid members of the Team. Since others seem to have a deep desire to do what she asks, only her deeply rooted sense of honor and drive to do the proper thing prevent her from becoming the most powerful con-artist or cult leader in the world.



Nature: Paragon

Allegiance: Team Tomorrow-Asia/Pacific

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4, Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 4, Charisma 5, Manipulation 5, Appearance 5

Abilities: Academics 4, Arts 1, Awareness 4, Biz 2, Bureaucracy 3, Command 5, Drive 1, Endurance 4, Etiquette 5 (Diplomacy, Social Graces, Tact), Interrogation 4, Investigation 4, Legerdemain 2, Linguistics 5, Martial, Perform 3, Rapport 5 (Discern Motivation), Resistance 5, Stealth 3, Style 4 (Fashion, Makeup), Subterfuge 4,

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Backing 5, Contacts 5, Eufiber 5, Followers 5, Node 2, Resources 5,

Quantum 4, Quantum Pool 28, Willpower 7, Taint 0

Powers: Mega-Dexterity • (Catfooted), Mega-Intelligence •• (Linguistic Genius), Mega-Wits •• (Lie Detector, Natural Empath), Mega-Appearance ••• (Awe-inspiring, First Impression, Seductive Looks), Mega-Manipulation ••••• (Hypnotic Gaze, Persuader, The Voice), Mega-Charisma ••••• (Commanding Presence, Dreadful Mien, Seductive, Soothe), Empathic Manipulation •••••

Note: When Ichiko wishes to have someone do her bidding, she uses all of her Social Mega-Attribute enhancements in tandem; consequently she often has many auto-successes before the Storyteller even rolls dice.

Melissanda Estevez

Growing up in Colombia, Melissanda had few choices in her life. She came from a family that had worked on a cartel coca farm in the western highlands. For generations, her family had tended the fields and both her grandfather and father had died as a result of coca contamination. Her brother joined the cartel army and carried drugs north to Mexico. Unfortunately, he himself became addicted. His own crew executed him after he made one too many mistakes.

Melissanda dreamed of becoming a world-class gymnast, but her schooling left a great deal to be desired, and her widowed mother needed what little income she could help provide. The first turning point in her life came when a cartel enforcer noticed her. She had learned to fight in the streets and she killed her first man at 16. The enforcer witnessed it. He offered her further training and a well-paying job.

Over the years, Melissanda grew strong, fleet and skilled. She stayed away from the drugs. They made her an enforcer and the cartel bosses noticed her. This wasn't necessarily a good thing. Competition for promotion was stiff among the enforcers. Eventually, Melissanda made too much of a name for herself. One of her fellow enforcers, through a slimy political move, had Melissanda sent on a suicide mission.

She didn't realize that the mission was a trap until it was too late. Then everything fell into place. She found herself in a Federale encampment, trapped in a room surrounded by soldiers who would kill her as soon as they found her. Melissanda's anger grew as she began to understand the maneuvering that had put her there and the fatal trick they had played on her. A sudden resolve grew in Melissanda, not only to survive, but to get revenge on the men who had done this to her. She erupted just as the Federales bashed in the door.

Utopia seemed the perfect place for Melissanda, at first, but she quickly set her sights on Team Tomorrow-Americas where she could combat the Medellín Cartels and have some hope of avenging herself with them. When Jennifer Landers was murdered, the team needed a teleporter, and Melissanda became it. Team Tomorrow gave her the opportunity she had never had: to become one of the good guys. Pulled up out of the poverty and hopelessness from which she came, she has developed a keen sense of right and wrong, though when it came to survival, there's nothing she won't do to stay alive.



Nature: Survivor

Allegiance: Project Utopia/Team Tomorrow-Americas

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4, Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 5, Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 5

Abilities: Athletics 5, Awareness 3, Brawl 2, Command 3, Endurance 5, Firearms 4, Intimidation 1, Melee 3, Might 2, Stealth 3, Streetwise 1

Backgrounds: Backing 3, Node 2, Resources 2

Quantum 2, Quantum Pool 24, Willpower 9, Taint 0

Powers: Mega-Dexterity ••• (Cat Footed), Mega-Stamina ••• (Adaptability, Regeneration), Mega-Wits ••• (Enhanced Initiative, Lie Detector), Body Modification (Adhesive Grip, Extra Bruised Health Level (x4)), Teleport •••••

Agents of Proteus

Director Thetis

Considering how few operatives of Project Proteus have even heard of Director Thetis, it's no surprise that theories as to the motives and thoughts of this cipher are few. Of those, fewer are anywhere near correct. Some claim that Thetis is a hyper-intelligent nova pulling Utopia's strings from beyond a curtain of secrecy. Others allege that she harbors a pathological hatred of all novas, and that she uses Project Proteus as a way to destroy them all. Others say stranger things, but most accounts agree on one thing: Director Thetis is a talented, determined woman of exceptional intelligence and fanatical devotion to at least some portion of Utopia's mission and the better world it promises. She keeps Proteus on a short leash, making sure that operatives adhere to (her version of) the Utopian vision.

Director Thetis' baseline status surprises many who work for her. Although her IQ tops out at over 190, she uses no quantum power, and her Mazarin-Rashoud node, while developed, remains latent. As a child, she progressed through school at an accelerated pace, graduating college by age 15 and getting dual doctorates in Political Science and Psychology by the age of 21 in the late 1960s. Since she was born of middle-class parents (a schoolteacher and a postal employee), she sought out grants and educational aid for her schooling, most of which came from the Aeon Society.

Once she finished her dissertation (titled: "The Complex Interplay of Government, Media Representation of Government and the Observing Human Mind") she was asked to assist in the formation of the young Project Utopia. At the same time, she was asked to join the American National Security Agency as an analyst. Rather than risking her future on an idealistic gamble like Utopia, the young woman joined the NSA. Analysis of reconnaissance data and "provincial" investigations (as she called working for the Internal Affairs branch of the NSA) did not hold her interest. She left the NSA after five years, floating between various corporate positions in the United States and Europe. Despite commercial success, Thetis found herself unable to stick to one job for much longer than a year.

At last, at the age of 59, she contacted her old liaison with the Aeon Society again. After much convincing and a quick fax transmission of her résumé, she convinced him to grant her an interview with the founding members of Project Utopia. Within the year, she found herself working in Utopia's Internal Affairs Division, acting as a quality-control regulator. The job sustained her for a time, until she began to see Utopia as a "soft" organization, too afraid to take the risks or harsh steps necessary in order to make the world better. Bringing her considerable intelligence to bear, she thought out and wrote up a proposal detailing what those risks and harsh steps were, and ways in which they could be taken successfully by Utopia, while doing as little collateral damage to Utopia's public image as possible. Naming the proposal the "Thetis Proposal" (as it would be the reason the young, heroic Utopia had become unbeatable, just as mythical Thetis was the one who had made Achilles invincible by dipping him in the River Styx), and naming herself after it, Thetis presented her ideas to the Director of Project Utopia, Justin J. Laragione. Though the director was resistant at first, he discussed her arguments with the board of Aeon. To his surprise (and later regret), they supported the Thetis proposal. The Aeon board approved and Laragione granted Thetis the resources and privacy she needed to get her Project Proteus (named for the ever-changing mythical deity who would not reveal his true form unless hopelessly caught) started and to hide it securely away from the rest of Project Utopia. Finally,

in Project Proteus and Project Utopia proper, Thetis had found something to keep her interested and that would challenge her intellect daily. She immersed herself in her work with an enthusiasm that she hadn't felt since her early days in school.

Thetis lives in a Utopia housing complex. She has no family, lives alone and devotes nearly all of her time to her control of Proteus. For a woman with such inspirational intelligence, power and drive, she has allowed her body to atrophy to an alarming extent. Hours in front of the computer have made Thetis one of the most informed persons on the planet but her inattention to the principles of balance and moderation has rendered her frail. It taxes her to walk from her office (which is in her house) to the bathroom. She has her meals brought to her at her desk to avoid having to get out of her chair. While Thetis is only in her sixties, she looks as though she's eighty or older. Her rationale is this: No one else can maintain Proteus' shield of intrigues nearly as well as she can, and if it takes her every waking moment to do so, then so be it.

However, just as Achilles was rendered vulnerable on the back of his heel because of the way his mother sought to make him invincible, it is possible that Project Utopia suffers from a similar flaw. This flaw is Director Thetis' single-minded determination to seeing Proteus' objectives through to their successful conclusion. Thetis' few vocal detractors say that she has become a fanatic with a great deal of covert power, and they fear her for it (a state which Director Thetis herself doesn't find inordinately distressing). What none of them can argue with, though, is the fact that Director Thetis knows how to manage people and information exceedingly well. Her adherence to discretion protocols is absolute, and on those occasions when a crack does appear in Proteus' armor of secrets, she is quick to seal it with media sleight of hand and public relations smoke and mirrors.

What Thetis does not know is that the goals of Proteus have become more and more distant from the honestly idealistic goals of Director Laragione, who watches Thetis' tactics with a critical eye. He senses that Thetis has the ear of someone (or perhaps many someones) on Aeon's board of directors, otherwise Laragione would have asked Thetis to step down the moment she explained to him the need for Jennifer Landers' death. With the media circus of the "Slider Scandal," Laragione has seen his worst fears realized, and his strongest case against Thetis made. During the height of it, Laragione had a long conversation with Phillipa Lavielle, the Director of the Aeon Society, and he made a strong case against the most Machiavellian of Proteus' tactics. While he will not ask the Director of Proteus to step down, Laragione has launched a campaign of cordial but relentless micromanagement that Thetis cannot help but recognize as a polite invitation to retire. Once Thetis leaves, Laragione intends to

shrink Proteus by half and place it under the direction of someone whose motives and judgement he trusts.

Thetis has thus far shown no inclination to leave, but neither has she recently taken any action that Laragione finds problematic. The two of them remain in a state of *entente*.



Director Ozaki

Next to Director Thetis, Director Ozaki is simultaneously the most feared and respected individual within Project Proteus. On him lies the responsibility of organizing Proteus' nova-related activities. All nova agents report to him as do any agents who take on missions that rely on interaction with novas. Despite this impressive mantle of duty, no records of Director Ozaki exist inside or outside Proteus. He is a palimpsest. Sharp operatives have come to believe that Ozaki is Director Thetis' protégé. Thetis herself refuses to comment on Ozaki's origin, stating simply that his old life is over, and that he has undergone his own new beginning.

What little agents of Proteus have been able to guess about Ozaki only sows more confusion. Those who have seen him exercise in one of Utopia's gyms remark that his back and arms are covered in complex tattoos and pictograms, leading them to wonder if he was connected to a cult of some sort. Others who have spoken to Ozaki at length would swear that he was connected to the Japanese Ministry of Trade, as he knows the names and various personal details of numerous officials within the Ministry, past and present. There are also some who speculate that Ozaki's fondness for, and thorough knowledge of, the Japanese Navy (which he will speak on at length in casual conversation) suggests that he was once a part of that branch of the Japanese military. What none of the speculators realize is that Ozaki had a hand in many

important Japanese organizations (if only peripherally) before Director Thetis found him. He juggled the responsibilities of each while keeping them all ignorant of his involvement with the others. Ozaki maintained this balancing act for many years out of duty (he says) to an ideal that he could see a better Japan during his lifetime.

At the onset of the Nova Age, Ozaki erupted, much to his delight. He used his abilities and his myriad connections to help usher in *Saisho*, Japan's "new beginning." Recognizing the Japanese novas' potential to make Japan an even stronger world power, he manipulated some of the first of them in ways that made them that much more attractive to the fad-prone Japanese populace. However, even though he kept his manipulations clandestine and rare, elements of the Yakuza and the Ministry of Trade discovered them independently. Fortunately, Director Thetis of Project Proteus discovered his subtle moves at the same time. Striking a deal and an immediate friendship, Thetis convinced Ozaki to direct his intelligence and spirit to aiding the more worldwide goals of Project Utopia. Considering her offer to be the best way to escape the Yakuza and the Japanese secret police, Ozaki accepted her offer and joined Utopia.

Upon returning with her to the Utopia complex in Bahrain, Ozaki was provided with his current identity and new living arrangements. Thetis agreed to expunge all records of his former life from OpNet databases around the world (though he suspects that she has kept copies of them to use as a bargaining tool against him). She then began assigning Ozaki to temporary posts as a consultant attached to the Internal Affairs Division in Utopian complexes around the world for random intervals. Never staying in one place for more than a month or two, Ozaki made a complete circuit of Utopia's world-spanning organization in a relatively short time. In each complex, he was instructed to observe the standard operating procedures, make contact with hidden Proteus operatives and make reports on how efficiently each complex operated. Thetis arranged a schedule for Ozaki to repeat this circuit once every five years, in hopes of familiarizing Ozaki with the workings of Utopia and Proteus so thoroughly that he could be groomed as her eventual replacement at the head of Project Proteus.

In his standard role as director of Proteus nova affairs, Director Ozaki applies the same fervor with which he manipulated novas in Japan to the world-stage. Although he holds no official position within Utopia other than "consultant," he monitors every Utopia-employed nova on record, seeing to it that they adhere to Proteus' standard of excellence. He has familiarized himself with the psychological profiles of every Team Tomorrow nova to such a degree that he knows them as well as a close friend would. He keeps detailed files on the whereabouts and displayed aptitudes of every public nova as well, ear-marking prom-

ising subjects for possible employment with Utopia or Proteus. He maneuvers them ruthlessly, keeping in line with Thetis' goals, granting no quarter in questions of security or liability.

He works closely with Director Thetis, communicating with her weekly and meeting in person no less than once every month to hone and redefine Proteus' objectives. As time has gone by, however, Ozaki has begun to question himself and his desire to see Utopia's vision come to pass, particularly after the death of Jennifer Landers. He has found many of Thetis' latest orders and machinations questionable, and while he does not challenge her authority directly, he continues to swallow his disagreement, letting them come to light infrequently. The main reasons he abides Thetis' decisions include his fear that she will reveal his identity to the novas and organizations he manipulated while in Japan, and his conviction that most of Project Proteus' initiatives are necessary means to an end. However, events like the Slider Scandal, which Ozaki himself had to organize and see to its conclusion, have made him question even that.



Nature: Survivor

Allegiance: Project Proteus

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5, Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 5, Charisma 5, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2

Abilities: Academics 3 (Asian History, Law, Philosophy and Geography), Arts 1, Athletics 4, Awareness 4 (Spot Ambush), Biz 2, Bureaucracy 5 (Administration, Procedures), Command 4 (Field Command, Tactics), Computer 2, Drive 4, Endurance 4, (Resist Interrogation), Etiquette 4 (Negotiation, Tact), Firearms 5 (Targeting), Interrogation 4 (Misdirection), Intimidation 3 (Implied Threat), Intrusion 4 (Countermeasures, Lock Picking, Security

Procedures), Investigation 5 (Interviews), Linguistics 3, Martial Arts 5 (Dirty Maneuvers), Might 2, Medicine 2, Perform 3 (Singing), Pilot 3, Rapport 3 (Intent), Resistance 5, Science 2 (Physics), Stealth 4 (Ambush), Style 1, Subterfuge 5 (Deception), Survival 4 (Navigation, Set Traps)

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Backing 4, Contacts 5, Eufiber 5, Followers 5, Influence 1, Mentor 4, Node 1, Resources 4, Quantum 2, Quantum Pool 24, Willpower 9, Taint 0

Powers: Mega-Dexterity ••• (Accuracy, Physical Prodigy), Mega-Stamina ••• (Resiliency), Mega-Perception •• (Hyperenhanced Hearing), Mega-Intelligence ••• (Analyze Weakness, Mental Prodigy: Tactical)

Doctor Richard Toiho

The paraphysician, Doctor Richard Toiho, joined Project Utopia's Nova Studies Division after leaving a promising career with the Triton Foundation. He graduated at the top of his class from Oxford, beaten out of the valedictorian spot by his old academic rival, Spencer Balmer. After finishing his doctorate in genetic medicine, Toiho took a lab director position with a medical research company that was later subsumed by the Triton Foundation. There, he did preliminary work on the development of adrenocilin and moxinoquantamine, as well as more generalized studies of novas and the Mazarin-Rashoud node. Toiho's work was never published widely, but it was respected enough within the medical community to garner him a profitable side-business as a paraphysician general practitioner.

Just before the turn of the millennium, Toiho was asked to join Project Utopia as a full-time paraphysician. He agreed on the condition that he be allowed to continue his research while he worked. Given a fully funded and staffed lab in lieu of a large salary or extensive benefits package, Toiho accepted the job and continued his work alongside the other doctors of Utopia's Nova Studies Division.

Toiho's dedication to his research won him the attention of Project Proteus. Thetis approached him with an offer to aid in some of Utopia's more subtle agendas by furthering his research, and he agreed without too many questions. His first assignment involved examining the feasibility of encoding the Zushima macrobe with a chemical that would act as an airborne birth-control agent on novas in order to keep their numbers down. Toiho shot down the idea so thoroughly that that Proteus initiative was nearly put aside for good, but Thetis rescued her pet project soon enough, and learned a lesson in just how carefully a Director needs to handle some over-achieving colleagues.

Doctor Toiho is currently involved in two Proteus-inspired projects that he hopes will solve some of the mysteries of nova existence: aberration analysis and Mazarin-Rashoud neotony.

Toiho has moved to a private suite of laboratories buried within the Bahrain complex to study the quantum-born in greater depth. His first area of study (and the one to which he devotes most of his time and resources) is that of the effects of quantum abuse. Calling on the hopelessly unredeemable inmates of the more secluded recesses of the facility, Dr. Toiho subjects novas to rigorous tests to determine the effects, limits and duration of the mutations wrought by channeling high levels of quantum energy. The tests are nightmarish ordeals designed to test the extremes of which a nova's body is capable of achieving, and he has made many enlightening discoveries. The advancement of science, however, is small comfort to the novas who find themselves the subjects of Toiho's tests, as many consider his torture sessions a punishment for the crimes that landed them in the facility. Yet there are a select few who realize and understand that Doctor Toiho's work ultimately seeks to achieve a cure for the side-effects of quantum channeling, and these perceptive souls even go so far as to volunteer to be Toiho's subjects.

Toiho's most fascinating work, however, lies in his study of a group of novas known only as the Children. Curious about the fact that most novas, even the few born to nova parents, don't erupt until well into puberty, Toiho worked to splice genetic material from two viable (i.e., fertile) nova subjects in order to create novas who were born with a developed M-R node, thus giving them the potential to channel quantum power at birth. Most of his attempts along these lines have met with catastrophic failure (including stillbirths by the score, grossly deformed children that had to be destroyed before reaching "term," mothers ripped open by their overly powerful fetuses, and children with no frontal cortex at all), but Toiho has actually managed to raise and maintain a small population of infant novas. Some of these novas suffer from undeniable psychological pathologies, but many show no adverse effects in their development. The Children seem highly resistant to all but the slightest effects of quantum abuse, and seem not to have a problem with Taint or aberrations. Additionally, they are much better at controlling the flow of quantum energy. Though most of their quantum powers are relatively minor, Toiho postulates that their quantum control will increase exponentially once they reach adolescence.

Toiho keeps his managers in Utopia appeased with minor facts and findings that keep him just valuable enough for his funding to be continued. His greatest findings, however, he has thus far kept to himself. Two of the Children, red-headed two-year old fraternal twins he called Adam and Eva, had been born *without* M-R nodes but *with* a highly developed ability to manipulate quantum. Toiho took Eva from the nursery into

the surgery room and euthanized her in order to study the anatomy and physiology of her brain. With visions of Nobel Prizes dancing in his head, Toiho discovered that the tiny hormone- and neurotransmitter-producing cells that clump together to form the M-R node (called farahcytes after Farah Rashoud) were, in Eva, distributed evenly throughout the gray matter, making her entire brain an enormous and wholly integrated M-R node. The ramifications of his discovery boggled Toiho's mind. Toiho returned to the nursery the next day to gather Adam, with whom he intended to replicate his findings. When he picked the child up, however, Adam opened his eyes, stared at Toiho, said in a clear, bright voice, "Too much light makes the baby go blind," and teleported, through quantum dampening fields, out of the Bahrain complex.

Toiho burned Eva's remains in the facility incinerator. He threw out Eva's and Adam's cribs. He burned or erased every note, every file, every disk he had made concerning them, and rearranged the remaining cribs so that their absence wasn't noticeable. He then took an extended vacation during which he went to London, fell in love, developed and kicked a heroin addiction, toyed with the idea of becoming an Anglican priest, and forgot utterly that Eva and Adam had ever been subjects of his research. To this day he can't explain, however, why he finds himself mouthing the words "Too much light makes the baby go blind," over and over again as he carries out his research.



Montressor

Montressor was once a man named Arthur Larian. Larian was a long-time agent of Project Proteus, assigned to temporarily supplement the contingent of guards at the Bahrain facility when Yaroslav Radocani was brought

in by Team Tomorrow. He stayed at the facility for several months, trying to make acquaintances among his fellow guards and other coworkers. Unfortunately, he made more of an impression on one of the inmates, a clinically psychotic nova serial killer calling himself only Niklos. Niklos befriended Larian, intending to use him as a pawn in an escape ploy.

After numerous gestures of friendship, Niklos won the lonely jailer over, and the two appeared to develop a strong bond of friendship. Over the next months, Larian came to visit Niklos after hours and between shifts until it seemed that he could not let a day pass without seeing the inmate's face. All the while, Niklos (who was completely immune to the effects of the moxinoquantamine that is administered regularly to Bahrain inmates, though he had never let anyone know) used extremely subtle mind powers to implant a command in Larian's mind that would influence him to help him escape.

However, Larian's Proteus supervisor caught on to Niklos's scheme, and he mobilized a cell of operatives to apprehend the prisoner when he made his play for freedom. When the last piece of his plan fell into place, and Niklos had finally tricked Larian into releasing him, the two of them found a cell of Proteus operatives waiting for them. Niklos fought to get away, and in the ensuing chaos, something in Larian's mind sprang to life.

Niklos (called "the Smiling Killer" by the tabloids) got away, only to be captured by T2M-A/P a day later, but Larian had erupted and nothing would be the same for him. Not only was Larian a nova, he was a nova of remarkable power.

After the ordeal, Larian was turned over to Director Ozaki, who saw to it that Larian was trained at his choice of Rashoud facilities. Surprisingly, when he felt confident enough in his newfound abilities, Larian asked to be re-stationed at the Bahrain facility. Ozaki and Thetis noted his remarkable quantum abilities and agreed. Taking on the code-name Montressor, Larian returned.

Montressor has since risen very quickly to the status of director over the facility. He knows the layout and structure of the building (even the off-limits areas to which only Proteus operatives have access) better than anyone currently employed there, and he has access to all files in Bahrain's computer storage cylinders. By this point, he has memorized the record of every nova imprisoned at the facility, and he has ultimate say-so over when and if an inmate has been sufficiently reformed to warrant another chance at freedom. He personally sees to it that the facility's security systems and personnel are more than up to the task of restraining problem novas. Montressor's responsibilities also include deciding which inmates are to be handed over to Doctor Toiho for research and which are likely candidates for use by Project Proteus for special, covert missions.

Despite his extensive authority, Montessor attempts to remain humane in the eyes of "his" inmates. He walks the halls daily, talking to the prisoners who are conscious, overseeing their reeducation and therapy sessions and conversing with the guards and social psychologists on call at the facility.

Montessor deals infrequently with the Children, but he does work with Toiho to see that their needs are met, playing with them or seeing that toys are imported to the facility so they don't feel so much like prisoners. Doctor Toiho believes that Montessor does so more from internalized guilt than any actual altruism, and the two men have gotten along poorly since the advent of the project that spawned the Children. Toiho's near nervous breakdown after Adam's disappearance didn't sit well with Montessor, either, straining the connection between the two even more.

At the end of every day, Montessor sits down and writes extensive reports on the inmates' progress and sends them through secure channels to Ozaki. Though almost comically exhaustive, the detailed reports continue to assure Ozaki (and through him Directors Thetis and Laragione) that Montessor has the Bahrain facility under tight control.



Nature: Survivor

Allegiance: Project Proteus/Utopia

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5, Perception 5, Intelligence 5, Intrusion 5 (Countermeasures), Wits 5, Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4

Abilities: Athletics 5, Awareness 4, Brawl 2, Bureaucracy 3, Command 3, Computer 3, Endurance 5, Firearms 4, Intimidation 1, Intrusion 4 (Security Procedures) Might 2, Rapport 5, Resistance 5, Science 2, Stealth 4, Streetwise 4

Backgrounds: Allies 3, Backing 3, Dormancy 4, Eufiber 5, Node 5, Resources 5

Quantum 4, Quantum Pool 28, Willpower 6, Taint 3

Powers: Mega-Dexterity •• (Accuracy), Mega-Stamina ••• (Adaptability, Regeneration), Mega-Wits ••••• (Enhanced Initiative x4, Quickness x4), Mega-Intelligence • (Eidetic Memory), Psychic Shield ••••, Absorption (Energy Magnet) ••••, Disrupt •••, Domination ••••, Quantum Leech (Extra: Energy Siphon) •••••, Quantum Vampire •••••

Proteus Thug

Typical Proteus thugs knows very little, if anything, about Project Proteus. They are most often recruited from among Project Utopia's small standing army at the request of General Broughton Kiser, and have no idea that Proteus, not Utopia, is sending them on assignment. While Proteus rarely sends baselines into combat against novas, there are times when it may do so, though not without arming the operatives with appropriate weaponry and body armor first.

Nature: Follower

Allegiance: Project Proteus

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4, Perception 2, Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Appearance 2, Manipulation 2, Charisma 2

Abilities: Athletics 3, Awareness 2, Brawl 4, Command 2, Computer 2, Drive 3, Firearms 3, Interrogation 2, Intimidation 3, Intrusion 3, Linguistics 2, Martial Arts 2, Medicine 1, Melee 3, Pilot 3, Stealth 2, Subterfuge 2, Survival 3

Backgrounds: Allies 2, Backing 4, Cipher 2, Resources 2
Willpower: 5

T2M Signature Powers

Bounce

Geryon struggled free of Montoya-Bernal's grasp. Spinning around, the Terat nailed Ricardo with a devastating right that sent the T2M strong man flying into the side of a nearby office building. As Geryon turned to walk away, his overdeveloped shoulders prevented him from seeing his opponent rebound off the wall back towards him. The monstrous nova could only absorb the impact and take his lumps as Montoya-Bernal returned to the fray.

Level: 2

Quantum Minimum: 1

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Bounce

Range: Self

Area: N/A

Duration: Maintenance

Effect: Allows the nova to bounce on, careen into and ricochet off of solid objects.

Multiple Attacks: Yes

Description: A nova with this ability is able to rebound off of solid objects. In a manner similar to the Absorption power, the nova may, when striking (or be-

ing struck by) a hard surface, convert the physical damage into kinetic force.

Any time the nova impacts with an object (or vice versa), he may use this power to negate bashing damage. The player rolls Dexterity + Bounce, with each success canceling out a single Health Level of damage. In addition, every level of damage thus canceled converts to a bouncing distance of three meters.

Characters may use Bounce to perform a Slam maneuver similar to that done by novas with Hypermovement. Similarly, each dot of Bounce adds two dice to tackle damage. A character with Bounce may, however, use his power to convert damage gained through a failed Slam roll back into momentum, careening off of the static target. The chance of knockback is determined normally.

Extras: Momentum Transfer (the character is able to more easily pass his momentum on to those he impacts, the Might score itself subtracts nothing from the attack, but each active dot of Density Control (Increase) and Sizemorph (Grow) still adds three effective Might, just as Sizemorph(Shrink) subtracts three); Negate Lethal Damage (the nova may negate lethal physical attacks in addition to bashing ones)

Silence

As she stood in Antonio Camparelli's private study, Figment thought about herself, pondering how she could truly be in that room when no one, not even herself, might hear, see or touch her. If something cannot be experienced, she wondered, how may one be certain of its existence? She was like Schrödinger's cat, needing only to make her presence felt, to be. She raised a sleep-gun that wasn't there and gently squeezed its nonexistent trigger. In response, the young mobster's eyes rolled back in his head and he slipped into a deep delta-wave nap. "Have you ever been experienced?" she thought to herself as she attuned the criminal to her wavelength. She passed through the walls of the estate with his sleeping form. "I have." In this instant, she became enlightened.

Level: 1

Quantum Minimum: 1

Dice Pool: Wits + Silence

Range: Self

Area: N/A

Duration: Maintenance

Effect: Quantum + number of successes versus opponent's Perception to go unheard

Multiple Actions: Yes

Description: This power renders its user imperceptible to normal hearing. Silence works against all attempts to detect the nova aurally, including the use of Hyperenhanced Hearing and mechanical augmentation, but the use of such enhanced means to detect the nova gain an extra die unless the character spends a Willpower point to reinforce her inaudible condition.

To become inaudible, the player pays the quantum point and rolls Wits + Silence. The successes gained, plus automatic successes equal to the character's quantum rating, are compared to the results of any Awareness roll made by any person attempting to detect the nova. Players not specifically trying to listen for the silent character are not allowed to roll for Awareness in any event. If the silenced nova rolls successes equal to or exceeding the number achieved by those trying to perceive her, she goes unheard.

If, instead, the listeners get more successes, they vaguely discern sounds produced by the nova, allowing them to pinpoint her position.

Silence extends a few inches from the nova's body, rendering snapping twigs and rustling clothes inaudible. The silent use of firearms or similarly loud devices requires the appropriate level in the Attunement Background.

Extras: None

Transmit

Done with his work in Central Park, Dr. Balmer walked into a nearby copse of oak trees. He placed a single green hand against the rough, near-black bark of one of the oaks and concentrated. As he did so, slender taproots extended downward from his feet to intertwine with those of the oak. Quercus velutina, Antaeus thought absently as his consciousness, like water, drifted downward and flowed into the tree's sturdy roots. Once there, his mind darted from plant to plant, passing out of the grove, then the park, then the city. Antaeus' essence streamed through forests, across plains and under lakes, leaping from one coast to the other in an instant.

In Yosemite, a crowd of tourists watched in rapt astonishment as the surface of Grizzly Giant began to warp and bow outward, finally defining itself into a man-shaped creature of lush vegetation. In a low tone, imperceptible to the throng, the nova murmured, "Sequoiadendron giganteum" and walked into the solitude of the redwoods.

Level: 2

Quantum Minimum: 2

Dice Pool: Perception + Transmit

Range: Self

Area: N/A

Duration: Instant

Effect: Allows the character nearly instantaneous transport via a chosen medium.

Multiple Actions: No

Description: A character possessing Transmit may travel through a medium specified when the power is purchased. Common mediums include power cables, phone lines, shadows and even root systems. Broader categories, which are essentially omnipresent, do not qualify — therefore, earth, air and water would be excluded, though fire would not.

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A character may travel any distance his level allows, as shown in the chart below. To do so, he pays his Quantum and flows into his chosen substance. The player then rolls Perception + Transmit to determine the number of successes. In combat or similar tense conditions, the nova may travel 50 meters per success garnered in a single action. If the character has a turn to concentrate, he may transmit himself any distance

his level allows, as indicated on the distance chart below. However, the player must still roll in order to determine time in transit, as specified by the time chart. Unlike teleport, there is no chance of missing the target, but the nova must have an unbroken line of the chosen medium between himself and his destination or it is impossible to transmit himself there.

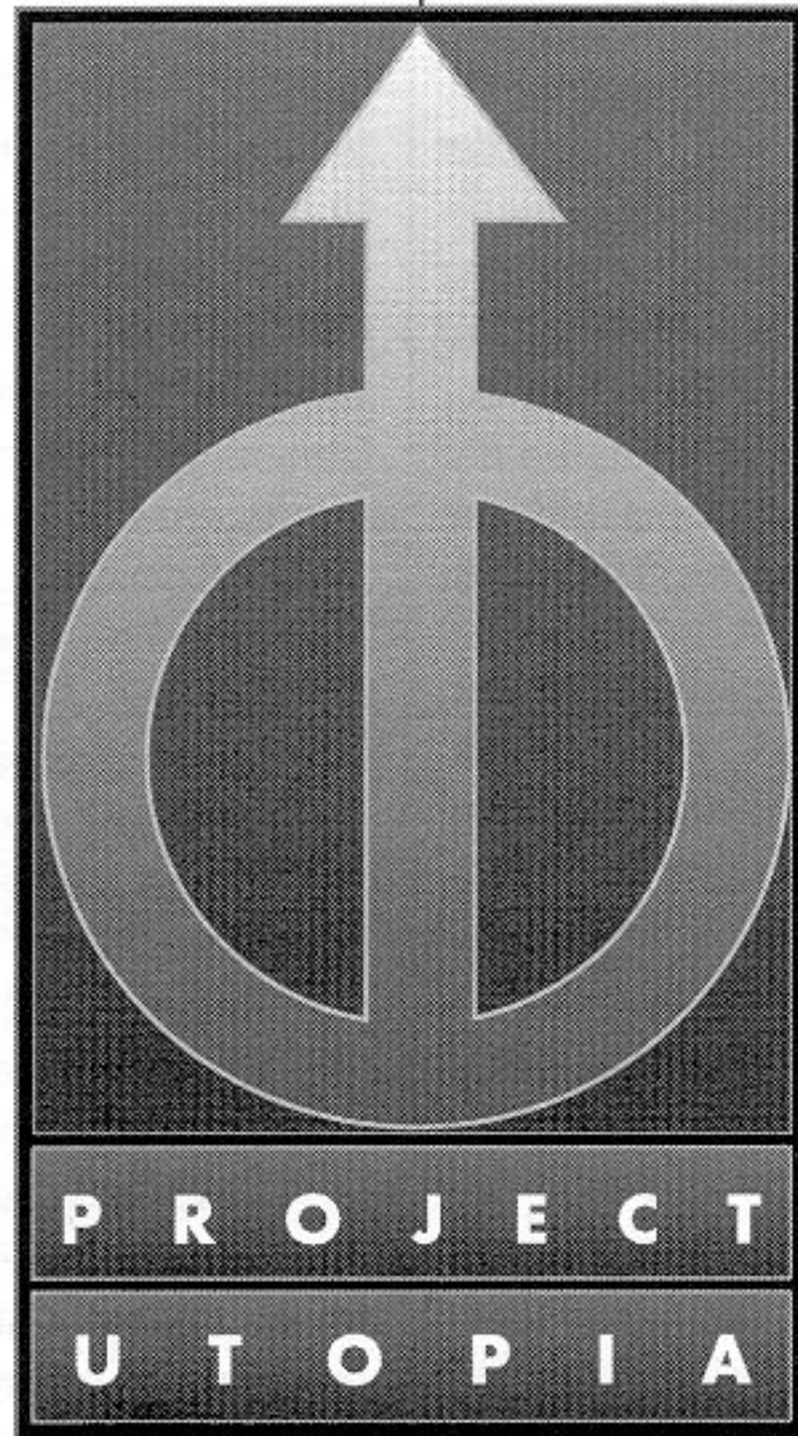
Transmit Distance

Level	Distance
•	two kilometers
••	20 kilometers
•••	200 kilometers
••••	2000 kilometers
•••••	20,000 kilometers

Transmit Times

Successes	Time
One	10 minutes
Two	5 minutes
Three	One minute
Four	One turn
Five	Instantaneous

Extras: Broadband (the character transmits himself via a medium found nearly everywhere, such as earth or radio waves); Incontiguous (the nova may enter one example of his chosen medium and exit at any other, whether there is an unbroken line of the substance or not; he might, for instance, enter a two-way mirror in a police station, only to exit from a bedroom mirror at home)





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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Prelude: The Welcome Home	1
Introduction	4
Chapter 1: Genesis	6
Chapter 2: Structure & Goals	33
Chapter 3: Team Tomorrow	57
Chapter 4: External Relations	88
Chapter 5: Project Proteus	94
Chapter 6: Storytelling	119
Appendix	128

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Guiding Humanity to a Better Tomorrow...

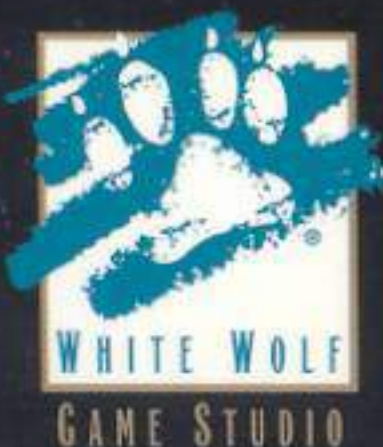
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